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GOLIATH AND MOROK

THE

WANDERING JEW.

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COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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THE WANDERING JEW.

FIRST PART.—The Transgression.

PROLOGUE.

THE LAND'S END OF TWO WORLDS.

The Arctic Ocean encircles with a belt of eternal ice the desert confines of Siberia and North America—the uttermost limits of the Old and New worlds, separated by the narrow channel, known as Behring's Straits.

The last days of September have arrived.

The equinox has brought with it darkness and Northern storms, and night will quickly close the short and dismal polar day. The sky of a dull and leaden blue is faintly lighted by a sun without warmth, whose white disk, scarcely seen above the horizon, pales before the dazzling brilliancy of the snow that covers, as far as the eyes can reach, the boundless steppes.

To the North, this desert is bounded by a ragged coast, bristling with huge black rocks.

At the base of this Titanic mass lies enchained the petrified ocean, whose spell-bound waves appear fixed as vast ranges of ice mountains, their blue peaks fading away in the far-off frost smoke, or snow vapor.

Between the twin-peaks of Cape East, the termination of Siberia, the sullen sea is seen to drive tall icebergs across a streak of dead green. There lies Behring's Straits.

Opposite, and towering over the channel, rise the granite masses of Cape Prince of Wales, the headland of North America.

These lonely latitudes do not belong to the habitable world; for the piercing cold shivers the stones, splits the trees, and causes the earth to burst asunder, which, throw-

ing forth showers of icy spangles, seems capable of enduring this solitude of frost and tempest, of famine and death.

And yet, strange to say, footprints may be traced on the snow, covering these headlands on either side of Behring's Straits.

On the American shore, the footprints are small and light, thus betraying the passage of a woman.

She has been hastening up the rocky peak, whence the drifts of Siberia are visible.

On the latter ground, footprints larger and deeper betoken the passing of a man. He also was on his way to the Straits.

It would seem that this man and woman had arrived here from opposite directions, in hope of catching a glimpse of one another across the arm of the sea dividing the two worlds—the Old and the New.

More strange still! the man and the woman have crossed the solitudes during a terrific storm! Black pines, the growth of centuries, pointing their bent heads in different parts of the solitude like crosses in a churchyard, have been uprooted, rent, and hurled aside by the blasts!

Yet the two travellers face this furious tempest, which has plucked up trees, and pounded the frozen masses into splinters, with the roar of thunder.

They face it, without for one single instant deviating from the straight line hitherto followed by them.

Who then are these two beings who advance thus calmly amidst the storms and convulsions of nature?

Is it by chance, or design, or destiny, that the seven nails in the sole of the man's shoe form a cross—thus:

*
***
*
*
*

Everywhere he leaves this impress behind him.

On the smooth and polished snow, these footmarks seem imprinted by a foot of brass on a marble floor.

Night without twilight has soon succeeded day—a night of foreboding gloom.

The brilliant reflection of the snow renders the white steppes still visible beneath the azure darkness of the sky; and the pale stars glimmer on the obscure and frozen dome.

Solemn silence reigns.

But, towards the Straits, a faint light appears.

At first, a gentle, bluish light, such as precedes moonrise; it increases in brightness, and assumes a ruddy hue.

Darkness thickens in every other direction; the white wilds of the desert are now scarcely visible under the black vault of the firmament.

Strange and confused noises are heard amidst this obscurity.

They sound like the flight of large night-birds—now flapping—now heavily skimming over the steppes—now descending.

But no cry is heard.

This silent terror heralds the approach of one of those imposing phenomena that awe alike the most ferocious and the most harmless of animated beings. An Aurora Borealis (magnificent sight!) common in the polar regions, suddenly beams forth.

A half circle of dazzling whiteness becomes visible in the horizon. Immense columns of light stream forth from this dazzling centre, rising to a great height, illuminating earth, sea, and sky. Then a brilliant reflection, like the blaze of a conflagration, steals over the snow of the desert, purples the summits of the mountains of ice, and imparts a dark red hue to the black rocks of both continents.

After attaining this magnificent brilliancy, the Northern Lights fade away gradually, and their vivid glow is lost in a luminous fog.

Just then, by a wondrous mirage, an effect very common in high latitudes, the American Coast, though separated from Siberia by a broad arm of the sea, loomed so close, that a bridge might seemingly be thrown from one world to the other.

Then human forms appeared in the transparent azure haze overspreading both forelands.

On the Siberian Cape, a man, on his knees, stretched his arms towards America, with an expression of inconceivable despair.

On the American promontory, a young and handsome woman replied to the man's despairing gesture by pointing to heaven.

For some seconds, these two tall figures stood out, pale and shadowy, in the farewell gleams of the Aurora.

But the fog thickens, and all is lost in darkness.

Whence came the two beings, who met thus amidst polar glaciers, at the extremities of the old and new worlds?

Who were the two creatures, brought near for a moment by a deceitful mirage, but who seemed eternally separated?

CHAPTER I.

MOROK.

THE month of October, 1831, draws to its close.

Though it is still day, a brass lamp, with four burners illumines the cracked walls of a large loft, whose solitary window is closed against outer light. A ladder, with its top rungs coming up through an open trap, leads to it.

Here and there at random on the floor lie iron chains, spiked collars, saw-toothed snaffles, muzzles bristling with nails, and long iron rods set in wooden handles. In one corner stands a portable furnace, such as tinkers use to melt their spelter; charcoal and dry chips fill it, so that a spark would suffice to kindle this furnace in a minute.

Not far from this collection of ugly instruments, putting one in mind of a torturer's kit of tools, there are some articles of defence and offence of a bygone age. A coat of mail, with links so flexible, close, and light, that it resembles steel tissue, hangs from a box, beside iron cuishes and arm-pieces, in good condition, even to being properly fitted with straps. A mace, and two long three-cornered-headed pikes, with ash handles, strong, and light at the same time, spotted with lately-shed blood, complete the armory, modernized somewhat by the presence of two Tyrolese rifles, loaded and primed.

Along with this arsenal of murderous weapons and out-of-date instruments, is strangely mingled a collection of very different objects, being small glass-lidded boxes, full of rosaries, chaplets, medals, AGNUS DEI, holy-water bottles, framed pictures of saints, etc., not to forget a goodly number of those chapbooks, struck off in Friburg on coarse bluish paper, in which you can hear about miracles of our own time, or "Jesus Christ's Letter to a true believer," containing awful predictions, as for the years 1831 and '32, about impious revolutionary France.

One of those canvas daubs, with which strolling showmen adorn their booths, hangs from a rafter, no doubt to prevent its being spoilt by too long rolling up. It bore the following legend:

"THE DOWNRIGHT TRUE AND MOST MEMORABLE CONVERSION OF IGNATIUS MOROK, KNOWN AS THE PROPHET, HAPPENING IN FRIBURG, 1828TH YEAR OF GRACE."

This picture, of a size larger than natural, of gaudy color, and in bad taste, is divided into three parts, each presenting an important phase in the life of the convert, surnamed

"The Prophet." In the first, behold a long-bearded man, the hair almost white, with uncouth face, and clad in reindeer skin, like the Siberian savage. His black foreskin cap is topped with a raven's head; his features express terror. Bent forward in his sledge, which half-a-dozen huge tawny dogs draw over the snow, he is fleeing from the pursuit of a pack of foxes, wolves, and big bears, whose gaping jaws, and formidable teeth, seem quite capable of devouring man, sledge, and dogs, a hundred times over. Beneath this section, reads:

"IN 1810, MOROK, THE IDOLATER, FLED FROM WILD BEASTS."

In the second picture, Morok, decently clad in a catechumen's white gown kneels, with clasped hands, to a man who wears a white neckloth, and flowing black robe. In a corner, a tall angel, of repulsive aspect, holds a trumpet in one hand, and flourishes a flaming sword with the other, while the words which follow flow out of his mouth, in red letters on a black ground:

"MOROK, THE IDOLATER, FLED FROM WILD BEASTS; BUT WILD BEASTS WILL FLEE FROM IGNATIUS MOROK, CONVERTED AND BAPTIZED IN FRIBURG."

Thus, in the last compartment, the new convert proudly, boastfully, and triumphantly parades himself in a flowing robe of blue; head up, left arm akimbo, right hand outstretched, he seems to scare the wits out of a multitude of lions, tigers, hyenas, and bears, who, with sheathed claws, and masked teeth, crouch at his feet, awestricken, and submissive.

Under this, is the concluding moral:

"IGNATIUS MOROK BEING CONVERTED, WILD BEASTS CROUCH BEFORE HIM."

Not far from this canvas are several parcels of halfpenny books, likewise from the Friburg press, which relate by what an astounding miracle Morok, the Idolater, acquired a supernatural power almost divine, the moment he was converted — a power which the wildest animal could not resist, and which was testified to every day by the lion tamer's performances, "given less to display his courage than to show his praise unto the Lord."

Through the trap-door which opens into the loft, reek up puffs of a rank, sour, penetrating odor. From time to time are heard sonorous growls and deep breathings, followed by a dull sound, as of great bodies stretching themselves heavily along the floor.

A man is alone in this loft. It is Morok, the tamer of wild beasts, surnamed the Prophet.

He is forty years old, of middle height, with lank limbs, and an exceedingly spare frame; he is wrapped in a long, blood-red pelisse, lined with black fur; his complexion, fair by nature, is bronzed by the wandering life he has led from childhood; his hair, of that dead yellow peculiar to certain races of the Polar countries, falls straight and stiff down his shoulders; and his thin, sharp, hooked nose, and prominent cheek-bones, surmount a long beard, bleached almost to whiteness. Peculiarly marking the physiognomy of this man is the wide-open eye, with its tawny pupil ever encircled by a rim of white. This fixed, extraordinary look, exercises a real fascination over animals—which, however, does not prevent the Prophet from also employing, to tame them, the terrible arsenal around him.

Seated at a table, he has just opened the false bottom of a box, filled with chaplets and other toys, for the use of the devout. Beneath this false bottom, secured by a secret lock, are several sealed envelopes, with no other address than a number, combined with a letter of the alphabet. The Prophet takes one of these packets, conceals it in the pocket of his pelisse, and, closing the secret fastening of the false bottom, replaces the box upon a shelf.

This scene occurs about four o'clock in the afternoon, in the White Falcon, the only hostelry in the little village of Mockern, situated near Leipsic, as you come from the north towards France.

After a few moments, the loft is shaken by a hoarse roaring from below.

"*Judas!* be quiet!" exclaims the Prophet, in a menacing tone, as he turns his head towards the trap-door.

Another deep growl is heard, formidable as distant thunder.

"Lie down, *Cain!*" cries Morok, starting from his seat.

A third roar, of inexpressible ferocity, bursts suddenly on the ear.

"*Death!* will you have done!" cries the Prophet, rushing towards the trap-door, and addressing a third invisible animal, which bears this ghastly name.

Notwithstanding the habitual authority of his voice—notwithstanding his reiterated threats—the brute-tamer cannot obtain silence: on the contrary, the barking of several dogs is soon added to the roaring of the wild beasts. Morok seizes a pike, and approaches the ladder; he is about to descend, when he sees some one issuing from the aperture.

The new-comer has a brown, sun-burnt face; he wears a gray hat, bell-crowned and broad-brimmed, with a short

jacket, and wide trousers of green cloth; his dusty leathern gaiters show that he has walked some distance; a game-bag is fastened by straps to his back.

"The devil take the brutes!" cried he, as he set foot on the floor; "one would think they'd forgotten me in three days. Judas thrust his paw through the bars of his cage, and Death danced like a fury. They don't know me any more, it seems?"

This was said in German. Morok answered in the same language, but with a slightly foreign accent.

"Good or bad news, Karl?" he inquired, with some uneasiness.

"Good news."

"You've met them!"

"Yesterday; two leagues from Wittenberg."

"Heaven be praised!" cried Morok, clasping his hands with intense satisfaction.

"Oh, of course, 'tis the direct road from Russia to France, 'twas a thousand to one that we should find them somewhere between Wittenberg and Leipsic."

"And the description?"

"Very close: two young girls in mourning; horse, white; the old man has long moustache, blue forage-cap, gray top-coat, and a Siberian dog at his heels."

"And where did you leave them?"

"A league hence. They will be here within the hour."

"And in this inn—since it is the only one in the village," said Morok, with a pensive air.

"And night drawing on," added Karl.

"Did you get the old man to talk?"

"Him!—you don't suppose it!"

"Why not?"

"Go, and try yourself."

"And for what reason?"

"Impossible."

"Impossible—why?"

"You shall know all about it. Yesterday, as if I had fallen in with them by chance, I followed them to the place where they stopped for the night. I spoke in German to the tall old man, accosting him, as is usual with wayfarers, '*Good-day, and a pleasant journey, comrade!*' But, for an answer, he looked askant at me, and pointed with the end of his stick to the other side of the road."

"He is a Frenchman, and, perhaps, does not understand German."

"He speaks it, at least, as well as you; for at the inn I

heard him ask the host for whatever he and the young girls wanted."

"And did you not again attempt to engage him in conversation?"

"Once only; but I met with such a rough reception, that, for fear of making mischief, I did not try again. Besides, between ourselves, I can tell you this man has a devilish ugly look; believe me, in spite of his gray moustache, he looks so vigorous and resolute, though with no more flesh on him than a carcass, that I don't know whether he or my mate Giant Goliath, would have the best of it in a struggle. I know not your plans: only take care, master—take care!"

"My black panther of Java was also very vigorous and very vicious," said Morok, with a grim, disdainful smile.

"What, Death? Yes, in truth; and she is vigorous and vicious as ever. Only to you she is almost mild."

"And thus I will break in this tall old man, notwithstanding his strength and surliness."

"Humph! humph! be on your guard, master. You are clever, you are as brave as any one; but, believe me, you will never make a lamb out of the old wolf that will be here presently."

"Does not my lion, Cain—does not my tiger, Judas, crouch in terror before me?"

"Yes, I believe you there—because you have means——"

"Because I have *faith:* that is all—and it *is* all," said Morok, imperiously interrupting Karl, and accompanying these words with such a look, that the other hung his head and was silent.

"Why should not he whom the Lord upholds in his struggle with wild beasts, be also upheld in his struggle with men, when those men are perverse and impious?" added the Prophet, with a triumphant, inspired air.

Whether from belief in his master's conviction, or from inability to engage in a controversy with him on so delicate a subject, Karl answered the Prophet, humbly: "You are wiser than I am, master; what you do must be well done."

"Did you follow this old man and these two young girls all day long?" resumed the Prophet, after a moment's silence.

"Yes; but at a distance. As I know the country well, I sometimes cut across a valley, sometimes over a hill, keeping my eye upon the road, where they were always to be seen. The last time I saw them, I was hid behind the water-mill by the potteries. As they were on the highway for this place, and night was drawing on, I quickened my pace to get

here before them, and be the bearer of what you call good news."

"Very good—yes—very good: and you shall be rewarded; for if these people had escaped me——"

The Prophet started, and did not conclude the sentence. The expression of his face, and the tones of his voice, indicated the importance of the intelligence which had just been brought him.

"In truth," rejoined Karl, "it may be worth attending to; for that Russian courier, all plastered with lace, who came, without slacking bridle, from St. Petersburg to Leipsic, only to see you, rode so fast, perhaps, for the purpose——"

Morok abruptly interrupted Karl, and said:

"Who told you that the arrival of the courier had anything to do with these travellers? You are mistaken; you should only know what I choose to tell you."

"Well, master, forgive me, and let's say no more about it. So! I will get rid of my game-bag, and go help Goliath to feed the brutes, for their supper time draws near, if it is not already past. Does our big giant grow lazy, master?"

"Goliath is gone out; he must not know that you are returned; above all, the tall old man and the maidens must not see you here—it would make them suspect something."

"Where do you wish me to go, then?"

"Into the loft, at the end of the stable, and wait my orders; you may this night have to set out for Leipsic."

"As you please; I have some provisions left in my pouch, and can sup in the loft whilst I rest myself."

"Go."

"Master, remember what I told you. Beware of that old fellow with the gray moustache; I think he's devilish tough; I'm up to these things—he's an ugly customer—be on your guard!"

"Be quite easy! I am always on my guard," said Morok.

"Then good luck to you, master!"—and Karl, having reached the ladder, suddenly disappeared.

After making a friendly farewell gesture to his servant, the Prophet walked up and down for some time, with an air of deep meditation; then, approaching the box which contained the papers, he took out a pretty long letter, and read it over and over with profound attention. From time to time he rose and went to the closed window, which looked upon the inner court of the inn, and appeared to listen anxiously; for he waited with impatience the arrival of the three persons whose approach had just been announced to him.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRAVELLERS.

While the above scene was passing in the White Falcon at Mockern, the three persons whose arrival Morok was so anxiously expecting, travelled on leisurely in the midst of smiling meadows, bounded on one side by a river, the current of which turned a mill; and on the other by the highway leading to the village, which was situated on an eminence, at about a league's distance.

The sky was beautifully serene; the bubbling of the river, beaten by the mill-wheel and sparkling with foam, alone broke upon the silence of an evening profoundly calm. Thick willows, bending over the river, covered it with their green transparent shadow; whilst, further on, the stream reflected so splendidly the blue heavens and the glowing tints of the west, that, but for the hills which rose between it and the sky, the gold and azure of the water would have mingled in one dazzling sheet with the gold and azure of the firmament. The tall reeds on the bank bent their black velvet heads beneath the light breath of the breeze that rises at the close of day—for the sun was gradually sinking behind a broad streak of purple clouds, fringed with fire. The tinkling bells of a flock of sheep sounded from afar in the clear and sonorous air.

Along a path trodden in the grass of the meadow, two girls, almost children—for they had but just completed their fifteenth year—were riding on a white horse of medium size, seated upon a large saddle with a back to it, which easily took them both in, for their figures were slight and delicate.

A man of tall stature, with a sun-burnt face, and long gray moustache, was leading the horse by the bridle, and ever and anon turned towards the girls, with an air of solicitude at once respectful and paternal. He leaned upon a long staff; his still robust shoulders carried a soldier's knapsack; his dusty shoes, and step that began to drag a little, showed that he had walked a long way.

One of those dogs which the tribes of Northern Siberia harness to their sledges—a sturdy animal, nearly of the size, form, and hairy coat of the wolf—followed closely in the steps of the leader of this little caravan, never quitting, as it is commonly said, the heels of his master.

Nothing could be more charming than the group formed by the girls. One held with her left hand the flowing reins, and with her right encircled the waist of her sleeping sister,

whose head reposed on her shoulder. Each step of the horse gave a graceful swaying to these pliant forms, and swung their little feet, which rested on a wooden ledge in lieu of a stirrup.

These twin sisters, by a sweet maternal caprice, had been called Rose and Blanche; they were now orphans, as might be seen by their sad mourning vestments, already much worn. Extremely like in feature, and of the same size, it was necessary to be in the constant habit of seeing them, to distinguish one from the other. The portrait of her who slept not, might serve them for both of them; the only difference at the moment being, that Rose was awake and discharging for that day the duties of elder sister—duties thus divided between them, according to the fancy of their guide, who, being an old soldier of the empire, and a martinet, had judged fit thus to alternate obedience and command between the orphans.

Greuze would have been inspired by the sight of those sweet faces, coifed in close caps of black velvet, from beneath which strayed a profusion of thick ringlets of a light chestnut color, floating down their necks and shoulders, and setting, as in a frame, their round, firm, rosy, satin-like cheeks. A carnation, bathed in dew, is of no richer softness than their blooming lips; the wood violet's tender blue would appear dark beside the limpid azure of their large eyes, in which are depicted the sweetness of their characters, and the innocence of their age; a pure and white forehead, small nose, dimpled chin, complete these graceful countenances, which present a delightful blending of candor and gentleness.

You should have seen them too, when, on the threatening of rain or storm, the old soldier carefully wrapped them both in a large pelisse of reindeer fur, and pulled over their heads the ample hood of this impervious garment; then nothing could be more lovely than those fresh and smiling little faces, sheltered beneath the dark-colored cowl.

But now the evening was fine and calm; the heavy cloak hung in folds about the knees of the sisters, and the hood rested on the back of their saddle.

Rose, still encircling with her right arm the waist of her sleeping sister, contemplated her with an expression of ineffable tenderness, akin to maternal; for Rose was the eldest for the day, and an elder sister is almost a mother.

Not only did the orphans idolize each other; but, by a psychological phenomenon, frequent with twins, they were almost always simultaneously affected; the emotion of one

was reflected instantly in the countenance of the other; the same cause would make both of them start or blush, so closely did their young hearts beat in unison; all ingenuous joys, all bitter griefs were mutually felt, and shared in a moment between them.

In their infancy, simultaneously attacked by a severe illness, like two flowers on the same stem, they had drooped, grown pale, and languished together; but together also had they again found the pure, fresh hues of health.

Need it be said, that those mysterious, indissoluble links which united the twins, could not have been broken without striking a mortal blow at the existence of the poor children?

Thus the sweet birds called love-birds, only living in pairs, as if endowed with a common life, pine, despond, and die, when parted by a barbarous hand.

The guide of the orphans, a man of about fifty-five, distinguished by his military air and gait, preserved the immortal type of the warriors of the republic and the empire—some heroic of the people, who became, in one campaign, the first soldiers in the world—to prove what the people can do, have done, and will renew, when the rulers of their choice place in them confidence, strength, and their hope.

This soldier, guide of the sisters, and formerly a horse-grenadier of the Imperial Guard, had been nicknamed Dagobert. His grave, stern countenance was strongly marked; his long, gray, and thick moustache completely concealed his upper lip, and united with a large imperial, which almost covered his chin; his meagre cheeks, brick-colored, and tanned as parchment, were carefully shaven; thick eyebrows, still black, overhung and shaded his light blue eyes; gold ear-rings reached down to his white-edged military stock; his top-coat, of coarse gray cloth, was confined at the waist by a leathern belt; and a blue foraging cap, with a red tuft falling on his left shoulder, covered his bald head.

Once endowed with the strength of Hercules, and having still the heart of a lion—kind and patient, because he was courageous and strong—Dagobert, notwithstanding his rough exterior, evinced for his orphan charges an exquisite solicitude, a watchful kindness, and a tenderness almost maternal. Yes, motherly; for the heroism of affection dwells alike in the mother's heart and the soldier's.

Stoically calm, and repressing all emotion, the unchangeable coolness of Dagobert never failed him; and, though few were less given to drollery, he was now and then highly comic, by reason of the imperturbable gravity with which he did everything.

From time to time, as they journeyed on, Dagobert would turn to bestow a caress or friendly word on the good white horse upon which the orphans were mounted. Its furrowed sides and long teeth betrayed a venerable age. Two deep scars, one on the flank and the other on the chest, proved that his horse had been present in hot battles; nor was it without an act of pride that he sometimes shook his old military bridle, the brass stud of which was still adorned with an embossed eagle. His pace was regular, careful, and steady; his coat sleek, and his bulk moderate; the abundant foam, which covered his bit, bore witness to that health which horses acquire by the constant, but not excessive, labor of a long journey, performed by short stages. Although he had been more than six months on the road, this excellent animal carried the orphans, with a tolerably heavy pormanteau fastened to the saddle, as freely as on the day they started.

If we have spoken of the excessive length of the horse's teeth—the unquestionable evidence of great age—it is chiefly because he often displayed them, for the sole purpose of acting up to his name (he was called *Jovial*), by playing a mischievous trick, of which the dog was the victim.

This latter, who, doubtless for the sake of contrast, was called Spoil-sport (*Rabat-joie*), being always at his master's heels, found himself within the reach of Jovial, who from time to time nipped him delicately by the nape of the neck, lifted him from the ground, and carried him thus for a moment. The dog, protected by his thick coat, and no doubt long accustomed to the practical jokes of his companion, submitted to all this with stoical complacency; save that, when he thought the jest had lasted long enough, he would turn his head and growl. Jovial understood him at the first hint, and hastened to set him down again. At other times, just to avoid monotony, Jovial would gently bite the knapsack of the soldier, who seemed, as well as the dog, to be perfectly accustomed to his pleasantries.

These details will give a notion of the excellent understanding that existed between the twin sisters, the old soldier, the horse, and the dog.

The little caravan proceeded on its way, anxious to reach, before night, the village of Mockern, which was now visible on the summit of a hill. Ever and anon, Dagobert looked around him, and seemed to be gathering up old recollections; by degrees, his countenance became clouded, and when he was at a little distance from the mill, the noise of which had arrested his attention, he stopped, and drew his

long moustache several times between his finger and thumb, the only sign which revealed in him any strong and concentrated feeling.

Jovial, having stopped short behind his master, Blanche, awaked suddenly by the shock, raised her head; her first look sought her sister, on whom she smiled sweetly; then both exchanged glances of surprise, on seeing Dagobert motionless, with his hands clasped and resting on his long staff, apparently affected by some painful and deep emotion.

The orphans just chanced to be at the foot of a little mound, the summit of which was buried in the thick foliage of a huge oak, planted half way down the slope. Perceiving that Dagobert continued motionless and absorbed in thought, Rose leaned over her saddle, and, placing her little white hand on the shoulder of their guide, whose back was turned towards her, said to him, in a soft voice, "Whatever is the matter with you, Dagobert?"

The veteran turned; to the great astonishment of the sisters, they perceived a large tear, which traced its humid furrow down his tanned cheek, and lost itself in his thick moustache.

"You weeping—*you!*" cried Rose and Blanche together, deeply moved. "Tell us, we beseech, what is the matter?"

After a moment's hesitation, the soldier brushed his horny hand across his eyes, and said to the orphans in a faltering voice, whilst he pointed to the old oak beside them: "I shall make you sad, my poor children: and yet what I'm going to tell you has something sacred in it. Well, eighteen years ago, on the eve of the great battle of Leipsic, I carried your father to this very tree. He had two sabre-cuts on the head, a musket-ball in his shoulder: and it was here that he and I —who had got two thrusts of a lance for my share—were taken prisoners; and by whom, worse luck?—why, a renegado! By a Frenchman—an *emigrant* marquis, then colonel in the service of Russia—and who afterwards—but one day you shall know all."

The veteran paused; then, pointing with his staff to the village of Mockern, he added: "Yes, yes, I can recognize the spot. Yonder are the heights where your brave father —who commanded us and the Poles of the Guard—overthrew the Russian Cuirassiers, after having carried the battery. Ah, my children!" continued the soldier, with the utmost simplicity, "I wish you had seen your brave father, at the head of our brigade of horse, rushing on in a desperate charge in the thick of a shower of shells!—there was nothing like it—not a soul so grand as he!"

Whilst Dagobert thus expressed, in his own way, his regrets and recollections, the two orphans—by a spontaneous movement, glided gently from the horse, and holding each other by the hand, went together to kneel at the foot of the old oak. And there, closely pressed in each other's arms, they began to weep; whilst the soldier, standing behind them, with his hands crossed on his long staff, rested his bald front upon it.

"Come, come, you must not fret," said he softly, when, after a pause of a few minutes, he saw tears run down the blooming cheeks of Rose and Blanche, still on their knees. "Perhaps we may find General Simon in Paris," added he; "I will explain all that to you this evening at the inn. I purposely waited for this day, to tell you many things about your father; it was an idea of mine, because this day is a sort of anniversary."

"We weep because we think also of our mother," said Rose.

"Of our mother, whom we shall only see again in heaven," added Blanche.

The soldier raised the orphans, took each by the hand, and gazing from one to the other with ineffable affection, rendered still the more touching by the contrast of his rude features, "You must not give way thus, my children," said he; "it is true your mother was the best of women. When she lived in Poland, they called her the *Pearl of Warsaw*—it ought to have been the Pearl of the Whole World—for in the whole world you could not have found her match. No—no!"

The voice of Dagobert faltered; he paused, and drew his long gray moustache between finger and thumb, as was his habit. "Listen, my girls," he resumed, when he had mastered his emotion; "your mother could give you none but the best advice, eh?"

"Yes, Dagobert."

"Well, what instructions did she give you before she died? To think often of her, but without grieving?"

"It is true; she told us that our Father in heaven, always good to poor mothers whose children are left on earth, would permit her to hear us from above," said Blanche.

"And that her eyes would be ever fixed upon us," added Rose.

And the two, by a spontaneous impulse, replete with the most touching grace, joined hands, raised their innocent looks to heaven, and exclaimed, with that beautiful faith natural to their age: "Is it not so, mother?—thou seest us?—thou hearest us?"

"Since your mother sees and hears you," said Dagobert, much moved, "do not grieve her by fretting. She forbade you to do so."

"You are right, Dagobert. We will not cry any more."—And the orphans dried their eyes.

Dagobert, in the opinion of the devout, would have passed for a very heathen. In Spain, he had found pleasure in cutting down those monks of all orders and colors, who, bearing crucifix in one hand, and poniard in the other, fought *not* for liberty—the Inquisition had strangled *her* centuries ago—but for their monstrous privileges. Yet, in forty years, Dagobert had witnessed so many sublime and awful scenes—he had been so many times face to face with death—that the instinct of *natural religion*, common to every simple, honest heart, had always remained uppermost in his soul. Therefore, though he did not share in the consoling faith of the two sisters, he would have held as criminal any attempt to weaken its influence.

Seeing them less downcast, he thus resumed: "That's right, my pretty ones: I prefer to hear you chat as you did this morning and yesterday—laughing at times, and answering me when I speak, instead of being so much engrossed with your own talk. Yes, yes, my little ladies! you seem to have had famous secrets together these last two days—so much the better, if it amuses you."

The sisters colored, and exchanged a subdued smile, which contrasted with the tears that yet filled their eyes, and Rose said to the soldier, with a little embarrassment. "No, I assure you, Dagobert, we talk of nothing in particular."

"Well, well, I don't wish to know it. Come, rest yourselves, a few moments more, and then we must start again; for it grows late, and we have to reach Mockern before night, so that we may be early on the road to-morrow."

"Have we still a long, long way to go?" asked Rose.

"What, to reach Paris? Yes, my children; some hundred days' march. We don't travel quick, but we get on; and we travel cheap, because we have a light purse. A closet for you, a straw mattress and a blanket at your door for me, with Spoil-sport on my feet, and a clean litter for old Jovial, these are our whole travelling expenses. I say nothing about food, because you two together don't eat more than a mouse, and I have learnt in Egypt and Spain to be hungry only when it suits."

"Not forgetting that, to save still more, you do all the cooking for us, and will not even let us assist."

"And to think, good Dagobert, that you wash almost

every evening at our resting-place. As if it were not for us to——"

"You!" said the soldier, interrupting Blanche, "I allow you to chap your pretty little hands in soap-suds! Pooh! don't a soldier on a campaign always wash his own linen? Clumsy as you see me, I was the best washerwoman in my squadron—and what a hand at ironing! Not to make a brag of it."

"Yes, yes—you can iron well—very well."

"Only sometimes, there will be a little singe," said Rose, smiling.

"Hah! when the iron is too hot. Zounds! I may bring it as near my cheek as I please; my skin is so tough that I don't feel the heat," said Dagobert, with imperturbable gravity.

"We are only jesting, good Dagobert."

"Then, children, if you think that I know my trade as a washerwoman, let me continue to have your custom: it is cheaper; and, on a journey, poor people like us should save where we can, for we must, at all events, keep enough to reach Paris. Once there, our papers and the medal you wear will do the rest—I hope so, at least."

"This medal is sacred to us; mother gave it to us on her death-bed."

"Therefore, take great care that you do not lose it: see, from time to time, that you have it safe."

"Here it is," said Blanche, as she drew from her bosom a small bronze medal, which she wore suspended from her neck by a chain of the same material. The medal bore on its faces the following inscriptions:

VICTIM of L. C. D. J. Pray for me! —— PARIS, February the 13th, 1682.	AT PARIS, Rue Saint François, No. 3, In a century and a half you will be. February the 13th, 1832. —— PRAY FOR ME!

"What does it mean, Dagobert?" resumed Blanche, as she examined the mournful inscriptions. "Mother was not able to tell us."

"We will discuss all that this evening, at the place where we sleep," answered Dagobert. "It grows late: let us be moving. Put up the medal carefully, and away!—We have yet nearly an hour's march to arrive at quarters. Come, my poor pets, once more look at the mound where your brave father fell—and then—to horse! to horse!"

The orphans gave a last pious glance at the spot which had recalled to their guide such painful recollections, and, with his aid, remounted Jovial.

This venerable animal had not for one moment dreamed of moving; but, with the consummate forethought of a veteran, he had made the best use of his time, by taking from that foreign soil a large contribution of green and tender grass, before the somewhat envious eyes of Spoil-sport, who had comfortably established himself in the meadow, with his snout protruding between his fore-paws. On the signal of departure, the dog resumed his post behind his master, and Dagobert, trying the ground with the end of his long staff, led the horse carefully along by the bridle, for the meadow was growing more and more marshy; indeed, after advancing a few steps, he was obliged to turn off to the left, in order to regain the high-road.

On reaching Mockern, Dagobert asked for the least expensive inn, and was told there was only one in the village—the White Falcon.

"Let us go then to the White Falcon," observed the soldier.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARRIVAL.

Already had Morok several times opened with impatience the window-shutters of the loft, to look out upon the inn-yard, watching for the arrival of the orphans and the soldier. Not seeing them, he began once more to walk slowly up and down, with his head bent forward, and his arms folded on his bosom, meditating on the best means to carry out the plan he had conceived. The ideas which possessed his mind, were, doubtless, of a painful character, for his countenance grew even more gloomy than usual.

Notwithstanding his ferocious appearance, he was by no means deficient in intelligence. The courage displayed in his taming exercises (which he gravely attributed to his recent conversion), a solemn and mystical style of speech, and a hypocritical affectation of austerity, had given him a species of influence over the people he visited in his travels. Long before his conversion, as may well be supposed, Morok had been familiar with the habits of wild beasts. In fact, born in the north of Siberia, he had been, from his boyhood, one of the boldest hunters of bears and reindeer; later, in

1810, he had abandoned this profession, to serve as guide to a Russian engineer, who was charged with an exploring expedition to the Polar regions. He afterwards followed him to St. Petersburg, and there, after some vicissitudes of fortune, Morok became one of the imperial couriers—those iron *automata*, that the least caprice of the despot hurls in a frail sledge through the immensity of the empire, from Persia to the Frozen Sea. For these men, who travel night and day, with the rapidity of lightning there are neither seasons nor obstacles, fatigues nor dangers; living projectiles, they must either be broken to pieces, or reach the intended mark. One may conceive the boldness, the vigor, and the resignation, of men accustomed to such a life.

It is useless to relate here, by what series of singular circumstances Morok was induced to exchange this rough pursuit for another profession, and at last to enter, as catechumen, a religious house at Friburg; after which, being duly and properly converted, he began his nomadic excursions, with his menagerie of unknown origin.

* * * * * * *

Morok continued to walk up and down the loft. Night had come. The three persons whose arrival he so impatiently expected had not yet made their appearance. His walk became more and more nervous and irregular.

On a sudden he stopped abruptly, leaned his head towards the window, and listened. His ear was quick as a savage's.

"They are here!" he exclaimed, and his fox-like eye shone with diabolic joy. He had caught the sound of footsteps—a man's and a horse's. Hastening to the window-shutter of the loft, he opened it cautiously, and saw the two young girls on horseback, and the old soldier who served them as a guide, enter the inn-yard together.

The night had set in, dark and cloudy; a high wind made the lights flicker in the lanterns which were used to receive the new guests. But the description given to Morok had been so exact, that it was impossible to mistake them. Sure of his prey, he closed the window.

Having remained in meditation for another quarter of an hour—for the purpose, no doubt, of thoroughly digesting his projects—he leaned over the aperture from which projected the ladder, and called, "Goliath!"

"Master!" replied a hoarse voice.

"Come up to me."

"Here I am—just come from the slaughter-house with the meat."

The steps of the ladder creaked as an enormous head appeared on a level with the floor. The new-comer, who was more than six feet high, and gifted with herculean proportions, had been well-named Goliath. He was hideous. His squinting eyes were deep set beneath a low and projecting forehead; his reddish hair and beard, thick and coarse as horse-hair, gave his features a stamp of bestial ferocity; between his broad jaws, armed with teeth which resembled fangs, he held by one corner a piece of raw beef weighing ten or twelve pounds, finding it, no doubt, easier to carry in that fashion, whilst he used his hands to ascend the ladder, which bent beneath his weight.

At length the whole of this tall and huge body issued from the aperture. Judging by his bull-neck, the astonishing breadth of his chest and shoulders, and the vast bulk of his arms and legs, this giant need not have feared to wrestle single-handed with a bear. He wore an old pair of blue trousers with red stripes, faced with tanned sheep's-skin, and a vest, or rather cuirass, of thick leather, which was here and there slashed by the sharp claws of the animals.

When he was fairly on the floor, Goliath unclasped his fangs, opened his mouth, and let fall the great piece of beef, licking his blood-stained lips with greediness. Like many other mountebanks, this species of monster had began by eating raw meat at the fairs for the amusement of the public. Thence having gradually acquired a taste for this barbarous food, and uniting pleasure with profit, he engaged himself to perform the prelude to the exercises of Morok, by devouring, in the presence of the crowd, several pounds of raw flesh.

"My share and Death's are below stairs, and here are those of Cain and Judas," said Goliath, pointing to the chunk of beef. "Where is the cleaver, that I may cut it in two?—No preference here—beast or man—every gullet must have its own."

Then, rolling up one of the sleeves of his vest, he exhibited a fore-arm hairy as skin of a wolf, and knotted with veins as large as one's thumb.

"I say, master, where's the cleaver?" He again began, as he cast round his eyes in search of that instrument. But instead of replying to this inquiry, the Prophet put many questions to his disciple.

"Were you below when just now some new travellers arrived at the inn?"

"Yes, master; I was coming from the slaughter-house."

"Who are these travellers?"

"Two young lasses mounted on a white horse, and an old fellow with a big moustache. But the cleaver?—my beasts are hungry and so am I—the cleaver!"

"Do you know where they have lodged these travellers?"

"The host took them to the far end of the court-yard."

"The building which overlooks the fields?"

"Yes, master—but the cleaver——" A burst of frightful roaring shook the loft, and interrupted Goliath.

"Hark to them!" he exclaimed; "hunger has driven the beasts wild. If I could roar, I should do as they do. I have never seen Judas and Cain as they are to-night; they leap in their cages as if they'd knock all to pieces. As for Death, her eyes shine more than usual like candles—poor Death!"

"So these girls are lodged in the building at the end of the court-yard," resumed Morok, without attending to the observations of Goliath.

"Yes, yes—but in the devil's name, where is the cleaver? Since Karl went away I have to do all the work, and that makes our meals very late."

"Did the old man remain with the young girls?" asked Morok.

Goliath amazed that, notwithstanding his importunities, his master should still appear to neglect the animals' supper, regarded the Prophet with an increase of stupid astonishment.

"Answer, you brute!"

"If I am a brute, I have a brute's strength," said Goliath, in a surly tone, "and brute against brute, I have not always come the worst off."

"I ask if the old man remained with the girls," repeated Morok.

"Well, then—no!" returned the giant. "The old man, after leading his horse to the stable, asked for a tub and some water, took his stand under the porch—and there by the light of a lantern—he is washing out clothes. A man with a gray moustache!—paddling in soap-suds like a washer-woman—it's as if I were to feed canaries!" added Goliath, shrugging his shoulders with disdain. "But now I've answered you, master, let me attend to the beasts' supper"—and, looking round for something, he added, "where is the cleaver?"

After a moment of thoughtful silence, the Prophet said to Goliath, "You will give no food to the beasts this evening."

At first the giant could not understand these words, the idea was so incomprehensible to him.

"What is your pleasure, master?" said he.

"I forbid you to give any food to the beasts this evening."

Goliath did not answer, but he opened wide his squinting eyes, folded his hands, and drew back a couple of steps.

"Well, dost hear me?" said Morok, with impatience. "Is it plain enough?"

"Not feed? when our meat is there, and supper is already three hours after time!" cried Goliath, with ever-increasing amazement.

"Obey, and hold your tongue."

"You must wish something bad to happen this evening. Hunger makes the beasts furious—and me also."

"So much the better!"

"It'll drive 'em mad."

"So much the better!"

"How, so much the better?—But——"

"It is enough!"

"But, devil take me, I am as hungry as the beasts!"

"Eat then—who prevents it? Your supper is ready, as you devour it raw."

"I never eat without my beasts, nor they without me."

"I tell you again, that, if you dare give any food to the beasts—I will turn you away."

Goliath uttered a low growl as hoarse as a bear's, and looked at the Prophet with a mixture of anger and stupefaction.

Morok, having given his orders, walked up and down the loft, appearing to reflect. Then, addressing himself to Goliath, who was still plunged in deep perplexity, he said to him:

"Do you remember the burgomaster's, where I went to get my passport signed?—to-day his wife bought some books and a chaplet."

"Yes," answered the giant shortly.

"Go and ask his servant if I may be sure to find the burgomaster early to-morrow morning."

"What for?"

"I may, perhaps, have something important to communicate; at all events, say that I beg him not to leave home without seeing me."

"Good! but may I not feed the beasts before I go to the burgomaster's?—only the panther, who is most hungry? Come, master; only poor Death? just a little morsel to satisfy her; Cain and I and Judas can wait."

"It is the panther, above all, that I forbid you to feed. Yes, her, above all the rest."

"By the horns of the devil!" cried Goliath, "what is the matter with you to-day? I can make nothing of it. It is a pity that Karl's not here; he, being cunning, would help me to understand why you prevent the beasts from eating when they are hungry."

"You have no need to understand it."

"Will not Karl soon come back?"

"He has already come back."

"Where is he, then?"

"Off again."

"What can be going on here? There is something in the wind. Karl goes, and returns, and goes again, and——"

"We are not talking of Karl, but of you; though hungry as a wolf you are cunning as a fox, and, when it suits you, as cunning as Karl." And, changing on the sudden his tone and manner, Morok slapped the giant cordially on the shoulder.

"What! am I cunning?"

"The proof is, that there are ten florins to earn to-night—and you will be keen enough to earn them, I am sure."

"Why, on those terms, yes—I am awake," said the giant, smiling with a stupid, self-satisfied air. "What must I do for ten florins?"

"You shall see."

"Is it hard work?"

"You shall see. Begin by going to the burgomaster's—but first light the fire in that stove." He pointed to it with his finger.

"Yes, master," said Goliath, somewhat consoled for the delay of his supper by the hope of gaining ten florins.

"Put that iron bar in the stove," added the Prophet, "to make it red-hot."

"Yes, master."

"You will leave it there; go to the burgomaster's, and return here to wait for me."

"Yes, master."

"You will keep the fire up in the stove."

"Yes, master."

Morok took a step away, but, recollecting himself, he resumed: "You say the old man is busy washing under the porch?"

"Yes, master."

"Forget nothing: the iron bar in the fire—the burgomaster—and return here to wait my orders." So saying, Morok descended by the trap-door and disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.

MOROK AND DAGOBERT.

Goliath had not been mistaken, for Dagobert was washing with that imperturbable gravity with which he did every thing else.

When we remember the habits of a soldier a-field, we need not be astonished at this apparent eccentricity. Dagobert only thought of sparing the scanty purse of the orphans, and of saving them all care and trouble; so every evening when they came to a halt he devoted himself to all sorts of feminine occupations. But he was not now serving his apprenticeship in these matters; many times, during his campaigns, he had industriously repaired the damage and disorder which a day of battle always brings to the garments of the soldier; for it is not enough to receive a sabre-cut—the soldier has also to mend his uniform; for the stroke which grazes the skin makes likewise a corresponding fissure in the cloth.

Therefore, in the evening or on the morrow of a hard-fought engagement, you will see the best soldiers (always distinguished by their fine military appearance) take from their cartridge-box or knapsack a housewife, furnished with needles, thread, scissors, buttons, and other such gear, and apply themselves to all kinds of mending and darning, with a zeal that the most industrious workwoman might envy.

We could not find a better opportunity to explain the name of Dagobert, given to Francis Baudoin (the guide of the orphans) at a time when he was considered one of the handsomest and bravest horse-grenadiers of the Imperial Guard.

They had been fighting hard all day, without any decisive advantage. In the evening, the company to which our hero belonged was sent as outliers to occupy the ruins of a deserted village. Videttes being posted, half the troopers remained in saddle, whilst the others, having picketed their horses, were able to take a little rest. Our hero had charged valiantly that day without receiving any wound—for he counted as a mere memento the deep scratch on his thigh, which a kaiserlitz had inflicted in awkwardly attempting an upward thrust with the bayonet.

"You donkey! my new breeches!" the grenadier had exclaimed, when he saw the wide yawning rent, which he instantly avenged by running the Austrian through with a thrust scientifically administered. For if he showed a stoical indifference on the subject of injury to his skin, it was not so with regard to the ripping up of his best parade uniform.

He undertook, therefore, the same evening, at the bivouac, to repair this accident. Selecting his best needle and thread from the stores of his housewife, and arming his finger with a thimble, he began to play the tailor by the light of the watch-fire, having first drawn off his cavalry-boots, and also (if it must be confessed) the injured garment itself, which he turned the wrong side out the better to conceal the stitches.

This partial undress was certainly a breach of discipline: but the captain, as he went his round, could not forbear laughing at the sight of the veteran soldier, who, gravely seated, in a squatting position, with his grenadier cap on, his regimental coat on his back, his boots by his side, and his galligaskins in his lap, was sewing with all the coolness of a tailor upon his own shop-board.

Suddenly, a musket-shot is heard, and the videttes fall back upon the detachment, calling to arms. "To horse!" cries the captain, in a voice of thunder.

In a moment, the troopers are in their saddles, the unfortunate clothes-mender having to lead the first rank: there is no time to turn the unlucky garment, so he slips it on, as well as he can, wrong side out, and leaps upon his horse, without even stopping to put on his boots.

A party of Cossacks, profiting by the cover of a neighboring wood, had attempted to surprise the detachment: the fight was bloody, and our hero foamed with rage, for he set much value on his equipments, and the day had been fatal to him. Thinking of his torn clothes and lost boots, he hacked away with more fury than ever; a bright moon illumined the scene of action, and his comrades were able to appreciate the brilliant valor of our grenadier, who killed two Cossacks, and took an officer prisoner, with his own hand.

After this skirmish, in which the detachment had maintained its position, the captain drew up his men to compliment them on their success, and ordered the clothes-mender to advance from the ranks, that he might thank him publicly for his gallant behavior. Our hero could have dispensed with this ovation, but he was not the less obliged to obey.

Judge of the surprise of both captain and troopers, when they saw this tall and stern-looking figure ride forward at a slow pace, with his naked feet in the stirrups, and naked legs pressing the sides of his charger.

The captain drew near in astonishment; but recalling the occupation of the soldier at the moment when the alarm was given, he understood the whole mystery. "Ha, my old comrade!" he exclaimed, "thou art like King Dagobert—wearing thy breeches inside out."

In spite of discipline, this joke of the captain's was received with peals of ill-repressed laughter. But our friend, sitting upright in his saddle, with his left thumb pressing the well-adjusted reins, and his sword-hilt carried close to his right thigh, made a half-wheel, and returned to his place in the ranks without changing countenance, after he had duly received the congratulations of his captain. From that day, Francis Beaudoin received and kept the nickname of Dagobert.

Now Dagobert was under the porch of the inn, occupied in washing, to the great amazement of sundry beer-drinkers, who observed him with curious eyes from the large common room in which they were assembled.

In truth, it was a curious spectacle. Dagobert had laid aside his gray top-coat, and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt; with a vigorous hand, and good supply of soap, he was rubbing away at a wet handkerchief, spread out on the board, the end of which rested in a tub full of water. Upon his right arm, tattooed with warlike emblems in red and blue colors, two scars, deep enough to admit the finger, were distictly visible. No wonder then, that, while smoking their pipes, and emptying their pots of beer, the Germans should display some surprise at the singular occupation of this tall, moustached, bald-headed old man, with the forbidding countenance—for the features of Dagobert assumed a harsh and grim expression, when he was no longer in presence of the two girls.

The sustained attention, of which he saw himself the object, began to put him out of patience, for his employment appeared to him quite natural. At this moment, the Prophet entered the porch, and, perceiving the soldier, eyed him attentively for several seconds; then approaching, he said to him in French, in a rather sly tone: "It would seem, comrade, that you have not much confidence in the washerwomen of Mockern?"

Dagobert, without discontinuing his work, half turned

his head with a frown, looked askant at the Prophet, and made him no answer.

Astonished at this silence, Morok resumed: "If I do not deceive myself, you are French, my fine fellow. The words on your arm prove it, and your military air stamps you as an old soldier of the Empire. Therefore I find, that, for a hero, you have taken rather late to wear petticoats."

Dagobert remained mute, but he gnawed his moustache, and plied the soap, with which he was rubbing the linen, in a most hurried, not to say angry style; for the face and words of the beast-tamer displeased him more than he cared to show. Far from being discouraged, the Prophet continued: "I am sure, my fine fellow, that you are neither deaf nor dumb; why, then, will you not answer me?"

Losing all patience, Dagobert turned abruptly round, looked Morok full in the face, and said to him in a rough voice: "I don't know you: I don't wish to know you! Chain up your curb!" And he betook himself again to his washing.

"But we may make acquaintance. We can drink a glass of Rhine-wine together, and talk of our campaigns. I also have seen some service, I assure you; and that, perhaps, will induce you to be more civil."

The veins on the bald forehead of Dagobert swelled perceptibly; he saw in the look and accent of the man, who thus obstinately addressed him, something designedly provoking; still he contained himself.

"I ask you, why should you not drink a glass of wine with me—we could talk about France. I lived there a long time; it is a fine country; and when I meet Frenchmen abroad, I feel sociable—particularly when they know how to use the soap as well as you do. If I had a housewife I'd send her to your school."

The sarcastic meaning was no longer disguised; impudence and bravado were legible in the Prophet's looks. Thinking that, with such an adversary, the dispute might become serious, Dagobert, who wished to avoid a quarrel at any price, carried off his tub to the other end of the porch, hoping thus to put an end to the scene which was a sore trial of his temper. A flash of joy lighted up the tawny eyes of the brute-tamer. The white circle which surrounded the pupil seemed to dilate. He ran his crooked fingers two or three times through his yellow beard, in token of satisfaction; then he advanced slowly towards the soldier, accompanied by several idlers from the common-room.

Notwithstanding his coolness, Dagobert, amazed and incensed at the impudent pertinacity of the Prophet, was at first disposed to break the washing-board on his head; but, remembering the orphans, he thought better of it.

Folding his arms upon his breast, Morok said to him, in a dry and insolent tone: "It is very certain you are not civil, my man of suds!" Then, turning to the spectators, he continued in German: "I tell this Frenchman, with his long moustache, that he is not civil. We shall see what answer he'll make. Perhaps it will be necessary to give him a lesson. Heaven preserve me from quarrels!" he added, with mock compunction; "but the Lord has enlightened me—I am his creature, and I ought to make his work respected."

The mystical effrontery of this peroration was quite to the taste of the idlers; the fame of the Prophet had reached Mockern, and, as a performance was expected on the morrow, this prelude much amused the company. On hearing the insults of his adversary, Dagobert could not help saying in the German language: "I know German. Speak in German—the rest will understand you."

New spectators now arrived, and joined the first comers; the adventure had become exciting, and a ring was formed around the two persons most concerned.

The Prophet resumed in German: "I said that you were not civil, and I now say you are grossly rude. What do you answer to that?"

"Nothing!" said Dagobert, coldly, as he proceeded to rinse out another piece of linen.

"Nothing!" returned Morok; "that is very little. I will be less brief, and tell you, that, when an honest man offers a glass of wine civilly to a stranger, that stranger has no right to answer with insolence, and deserves to be taught manners if he does so."

Great drops of sweat ran down Dagobert's forehead and cheeks; his large imperial was incessantly agitated by nervous trembling—but he restrained himself. Taking, by two of the corners, the handkerchief which he had just dipped in the water, he shook it, wrung it, and began to hum to himself the burden of the old camp ditty:

"Out of Tirlemont's flea-haunted den,
We ride forth next day of the sen,
With sabre in hand, ah!
Good-bye to Amanda," etc.

The silence to which Dagobert had condemned himself, almost choked him; this song afforded him some relief.

Morok, turning towards the spectators, said to them, with an air of hypocritical restraint: "We knew that the soldiers of Napoleon were pagans, who stabled their horses in churches, and offended the Lord a hundred times a day, and who, for their sins, were justly drowned in the Beresino, like so many Pharaohs; but we did not know that the Lord, to punish these miscreants, had deprived them of courage—their single gift. Here is a man, who has insulted, in me, a creature favored by divine grace, and who affects not to understand that I require an apology; or else——"

"What?" said Dagobert, without looking at the Prophet.

"Or you must give me satisfaction!—I have already told you that I have seen service. We shall easily find somewhere a couple of swords, and to-morrow morning, at peep of day, we can meet behind a wall, and show the color of our blood—that is, if you have any in your veins!"

This challenge began to frighten the spectators, who were not prepared for so tragical a conclusion.

"What, fight?—a very fine idea!" said one. "To get yourselves both locked up in prison: the laws against duelling are strict."

"Particularly with relation to strangers or nondescripts," added another. "If they were to find you with arms in your hands, the burgomaster would shut you up in jail, and keep you there two or three months before trial."

"Would you be so mean as to denounce us?" asked Morok.

"No, certainly not," cried several; "do as you like. We are only giving you a friendly piece of advice, by which you may profit, if you think fit."

"What care I for prison?" exclaimed the Prophet. "Only give me a couple of swords, and you shall see to-morrow morning if I heed what the burgomaster can do or say."

"What would you do with two swords?" asked Dagobert, quietly.

"When you have one in your grasp, and I one in mine, you'd see. The Lord commands us to have a care of his honor!"

Dagobert shrugged his shoulders, made a bundle of his linen in his handkerchief, dried his soap, and put it carefully into a little oil-silk bag—then, whistling his favorite air of Tirlemont, moved to depart.

The Prophet frowned; he began to fear that his challenge would not be accepted. He advanced a step or so to encounter Dagobert, placed himself before him, as if to inter-

cept his passage, and, folding his arms, and scanning him from head to foot with bitter insolence, said to him: "So! an old soldier of that arch-robber, Napoleon, is only fit for a washerwoman, and refuses to fight!"

"Yes, he refuses to fight," answered Dagobert, in a firm voice, but becoming fearfully pale. Never, perhaps, had the soldier given to his orphan charge such a proof of tenderness and devotion. For a man of his character to let himself be insulted with impunity, and refuse to fight—the sacrifice was immense!

"So you are a coward—you are afraid of me—and you confess it?"

At these words Dagobert made, as it were, a pull upon himself—as if a sudden thought had restrained him the moment he was about to rush on the Prophet. Indeed, he had remembered the two maidens, and the fatal hindrance which a duel, whatever might be the result, would occasion to their journey. But the impulse of anger, though rapid, had been so significant—the expression of the stern, pale face, bathed in sweat, was so daunting, that the Prophet and the spectators drew back a step.

Profound silence reigned for some seconds, and then, by a sudden reaction, Dagobert seemed to have gained the general interest. One of the company said to those near him: "This man is clearly not a coward."

"Oh, no! certainly not."

"It sometimes requires more courage to refuse a challenge than to accept one."

"After all, the Prophet was wrong to pick a quarrel about nothing—and with a stranger, too."

"Yes, for a stranger, if he fought and was taken up, would have a good long imprisonment."

"And then, you see," added another, "he travels with two young girls. In such a position, ought a man to fight about trifles? If he should be killed or put in prison, what would become of them, poor children?"

Dagobert turned towards the person who had pronounced these last words. He saw a stout fellow, with a frank and simple countenance; the soldier offered him his hand, and said with emotion:

"Thank you, sir."

The German shook cordially the hand which Dagobert had proffered, and, holding it still in his own, he added: "Do one thing, sir—share a bowl of punch with us. We will make that mischief-making Prophet acknowledge

that he has been too touchy, and he shall drink to your health."

Up to this moment the brute-tamer, enraged at the issue of this scene, for he had hoped that the soldier would accept his challenge, looked on with savage contempt at those who had thus sided against him. But now his features gradually relaxed; and, believing it useful to his projects to hide his disappointment, he walked up to the soldier, and said to him, with a tolerably good grace: "Well, I give way to these gentlemen. I own I was wrong. Your frigid air had wounded me, and I was not master of myself. I repeat, that I was wrong," he added, with suppressed vexation; "the Lord commands humility—and—I beg your pardon."

This proof of moderation and regret was highly appreciated and loudly applauded by the spectators. "He asks your pardon; you cannot expect more, my brave fellow?" said one of them, addressing Dagobert. "Come, let us all drink together; we make you this offer frankly—accept it in the same spirit."

"Yes, yes: accept it, we beg you, in the name of your pretty little girls," said the stout man, hoping to decide Dagobert by this argument.

"Many thanks, gentlemen," replied he, touched by the hearty advances of the Germans; "you are very worthy people. But, when one is treated, he must offer drink in return."

"Well, we will accept it—that's understood. Each his turn, and all fair. We will pay for the first bowl, you for the second."

"Poverty is no crime," answered Dagobert; "and I must tell you honestly that I cannot afford to pay for drink. We have still a long journey to go, and I must not incur any useless expenses."

The soldier spoke these words with such firm, but simple dignity, that the Germans did not venture to renew their offer, feeling that a man of Dagobert's character could not accept it without humiliation.

"Well, so much the worse," said the stout man. "I should have liked to clink glasses with you. Good-night, my brave trooper!—good-night for it grows late, and mine host of the Falcon will soon turn us out of doors."

"Good-night, gentlemen," replied Dagobert, as he directed his steps towards the stable, to give his horse a second allowance of provender.

Morok approached him, and said in a voice even more

humble than before: "I have acknowledged my error, and asked your pardon. You have not answered me; do you still bear malice?"

"If ever I meet you," said the veteran, in a suppressed and hollow tone, "when my children have no longer need of me, I will just say two words to you, and they will not be long ones."

Then he turned his back abruptly on the Prophet, who walked slowly out of the yard.

The inn of the White Falcon formed a parallelogram. At one end rose the principal dwelling; at the other was a range of buildings which contained sundry chambers, let at a low price to the poorer sort of travellers; a vaulted passage opened a way through this latter into the country; finally, on either side of the court-yard were sheds and stables, with lofts and garrets erected over them.

Dagobert, entering one of these stables, took from off a chest the portion of oats destined for his horse, and, pouring it into a winnowing-basket, shook it as he approached Jovial.

To his great astonishment, his old travelling companion did not respond with a joyous neigh to the rustle of the oats rattling on the wicker-work. Alarmed, he called Jovial with a friendly voice; but the animal, instead of turning towards his master a look of intelligence, and impatiently striking the ground with his fore-feet, remained perfectly motionless.

More and more surprised, the soldier went up to him. By the dubious light of a stable-lantern, he saw the poor animal in an attitude which implied terror—his legs half bent, his head stretched forward, his ears down, his nostrils quivering; he had drawn tight his halter, as if he wished to break it, in order to get away from the partition that supported his rack and manger; abundant cold-sweat had speckled his hide with bluish stains, and his coat altogether looked dull and bristling, instead of standing out sleek and glossy from the dark background of the stable; lastly, from time to time, his body shook with convulsive starts.

"Why, old Jovial!" said the soldier, as he put down the basket, in order to soothe his horse with more freedom, "you are like thy master—afraid!—Yes," he added with bitterness, as he thought of the offence he had himself endured, "you are afraid—though no coward in general."

Notwithstanding the caresses and the voice of his master, the horse continued to give signs of terror; he pulled somewhat less violently at his halter, and approaching his nostrils

to the hand of Dagobert, sniffed audibly, as if he doubted it were he.

"You don't know me!" cried Dagobert. "Something extraordinary must be passing here."

The soldier looked around him with uneasiness It was a large stable, faintly lighted by the lantern suspended from the roof, which was covered with innumerable cobwebs; at the further end, separated from Jovial by some stalls with bars between, were the three strong, black, horses of the brute-tamer—as tranquil as Jovial was frightened.

Dagobert, struck with this singular contrast, of which he was soon to have the explanation, again caressed his horse; and the animal, gradually reassured by his master's presence, licked his hands, rubbed his head against him, uttered a low neigh, and gave him his usual tokens of affection.

"Come, come, this is how I like to see my old Jovial!" said Dagobert, as he took up the winnowing-basket, and poured its contents into the manger. "Now eat with a good appetite, for we have a long day's march to-morrow; and, above all, no more of these foolish fears about nothing! If thy comrade, Spoil-sport, was here, he would keep you in heart; but he is along with the children, and takes care of them in my absence. Come, eat! instead of staring at me in that way."

But the horse, having just touched the oats with his mouth, as if in obedience to his master, returned to them no more, and began to nibble at the sleeve of Dagobert's coat.

"Come, come, my poor Jovial! there is something the matter with you. You have generally such a good appetite, and now you leave your corn. 'Tis the first time this has happened since our departure," said the soldier, who was now growing seriously uneasy, for the issue of his journey greatly depended on the health and vigor of his horse.

Just then a frightful roaring, so near that it seemed to come from the stable in which they were, gave so violent a shock to Jovial, that with one effort he broke his halter, leaped over the bar that marked his place, and, rushing at the open door, escaped into the court-yard.

Dagobert had himself started at the suddenness of this wild and fearful sound, which at once explained to him the cause of his horse's terror. The adjoining stable was occupied by the itinerant menagerie of the brute-tamer, and was only separated by the partition which supported the mangers. The three horses of the Prophet, accustomed to these howlings, had remained perfectly quiet.

"Good!" said the soldier, recovering himself; "I understand it now. Jovial has heard another such roar before, and he can scent the animals of that insolent scoundrel. It is enough to frighten him," added he, as he carefully collected the oats from the manger; "once in another stable, and there must be others in this place, he will no longer leave his peck, and we shall be able to start early to-morrow morning."

The terrified horse, after running and galloping about the yard, returned at the voice of the soldier, who easily caught him by the broken halter; and a hostler, whom Dagobert asked if there was another vacant stable, having pointed out one that was only intended for a single animal, Jovial was comfortably installed there.

When delivered from his ferocious neighbors, the horse became tranquil as before, and even amused himself much at the expense of Dagobert's top-coat, which, thanks to his tricks, might have afforded immediate occupation for his master's needle, if the latter had not been fully engaged in admiring the eagerness with which Jovial despatched his provender. Completely reassured on his account, the soldier shut the door of the stable, and proceeded to get his supper as quickly as possible, in order to rejoin the orphans, whom he reproached himself with having left so long.

CHAPTER V.

ROSE AND BLANCHE.

The orphans occupied a dilapidated chamber in one of the most remote wings of the inn, with a single window opening upon the country. A bed without curtains, a table, and two chairs, composed the more than modest furniture of this retreat, which was now lighted by a lamp. On the table, which stood near the window, was deposited the knapsack of the soldier.

The great Siberian dog, who was lying close to the door, had already twice uttered a deep growl, and turned his head towards the window—but without giving any further effect to this hostile manifestation.

The two sisters, half recumbent in their bed, were clad in long white wrappers, buttoned at the neck and wrists. They wore no caps, but their beautiful chestnut hair was

confined at the temples by a broad piece of tape, so that it might not get tangled during the night. These white garments, and the white fillet that like a halo encircled their brows, gave to their fresh and blooming faces a still more candid expression.

The orphans laughed and chatted, for, in spite of some early sorrows, they still retained the ingenuous gayety of their age. The remembrance of their mother would sometimes make them sad, but this sorrow had in it nothing bitter; it was rather a sweet melancholy, to be sought instead of shunned. For them, this adored mother was not dead—she was only absent.

Almost as ignorant as Dagobert, with regard to devotional exercises, for in the desert where they had lived there was neither church nor priest, their faith, as was already said, consisted in this—that God, just and good, had so much pity for the poor mothers whose children were left on earth, that he allowed them to look down upon them from highest heaven—to see them always, to hear them always, and sometimes to send fair guardian angels to protect them. Thanks to this guileless illusion, the orphans, persuaded that their mother incessantly watched over them, felt, that to do wrong would be to afflict her, and to forfeit the protection of the good angels.——This was the entire theology of Rose and Blanche—a creed sufficient for such pure and loving souls.

Now, on the evening in question, the two sisters chatted together whilst waiting for Dagobert. Their theme interested them much, for, since some days, they had a secret, a great secret, which often quickened the beatings of their innocent hearts, often agitated their budding bosoms, changed to bright scarlet the roses on their cheeks, and infused a restless and dreamy languor into the soft blue of their large eyes.

Rose, this evening, occupied the edge of the couch, with her rounded arms crossed behind her head, which was half turned towards her sister; Blanche, with her elbow resting on the bolster, looked at her smilingly, and said: "Do you think he will come again to-night?"

"Oh, yes! certainly. He promised us yesterday."

"He is so good, he would not break his promise."

"And so handsome, with his long fair curls."

"And his name—what a charming name!—how well it suits his face."

"And what a sweet smile and soft voice, when he says to

us, taking us by the hand: 'My children, bless God that He has given you one soul. What others seek elsewhere, you will find in yourselves.' "

"'Since your two hearts,' he added, 'only make one.' "

"What pleasure to remember his words, sister!"

"We are so attentive! When I see you listening to him, it is as if I saw myself, my dear little mirror!" said Rose, laughing, and kissing her sister's forehead. "Well—when he speaks, your—or rather *our* eyes—are wide, wide open, our lips moving as if we repeated every word after him. It is no wonder we forget nothing that he says."

"And what he says is so grand, so noble, and generous."

"Then, my sister, as he goes on talking, what good thoughts rise within us! If we could but always keep them in mind."

"Do not be afraid! they will remain in our hearts, like little birds in their mother's nests."

"And how lucky it is, Rose, that he loves us both at the same time!"

"He could not do otherwise, since we have but one heart between us."

"How could he love Rose, without loving Blanche?"

"What would have become of the poor, neglected one?"

"And then again he would have found it so difficult to choose."

"We are so much like one another."

"So, to save himself that trouble," said Rose, laughing, "he has chosen us both."

"And is it not the best way? He is alone to love us; we are two together to think of him."

"Only he must not leave us till we reach Paris."

"And in Paris, too—we must see him there also."

"Oh, above all at Paris; it will be good to have him with us—and Dagobert, too—in that great city. Only think, Blanche, how beautiful it must be."

"Paris!—it must be like a city all of gold."

"A city, where every one must be happy, since it is so beautiful."

"But ought we, poor orphans, dare so much as to enter it? How people will look at us!"

"Yes—but every one there is happy, every one must be good also."

"They will love us."

"And, besides, we shall be with our friend with the fair hair and blue eyes."

"He has yet told us nothing of Paris."

"He has not thought of it; we must speak to him about it this very night."

"If he is in the mood for talking. Often, you know, he likes best to gaze on us in silence—his eyes on our eyes."

"Yes. In those moments, his look recalls to me the gaze of our dear mother."

"And, as she sees it all, how pleased she must be at what has happened to us!"

"Because, when we are so much beloved, we must, I hope, deserve it."

"See what a vain thing it is!" said Blanche, smoothing with her slender fingers the parting of the hair on her sister's forehead.

After a moment's reflection, Rose said to her: "Don't you think we should relate all this to Dagobert?"

"If you think so, let us do it."

"We tell him everything, as we told everything to mother. Why should we conceal this from him?"

"Especially as it is something which gives us so much pleasure."

"Do you not find that, since we have known our friend, our hearts beat quicker and stronger?"

"Yes, they seem to be more full."

"The reason why is plain enough; our friend fills up a good space in them."

"Well, we will do best to tell Dagobert what a lucky star ours is."

"You are right——" At this moment the dog gave another deep growl.

"Sister," said Rose, as she pressed closer to Blanche, "there is the dog growling again. What can be the matter with him?"

"Spoil-sport, do not growl! Come hither," said Blanche, striking with her little hand on the side of the bed.

The dog rose, again growled deeply, and came to lay his great, intelligent looking head on the counterpane, still obstinately casting a sidelong glance at the window; the sisters bent over him to pat his broad forehead, in the centre of which was a remarkable bump, the certain sign of extreme purity of race.

"What makes you growl so, Spoil-sport?" said Blanche, pulling him gently by the ears—"eh, my good dog?"

"Poor beast! he is always so uneasy when Dagobert is away."

"It is true; one would think he knows that he then has a double charge over us."

"Sister, it seems to me, Dagobert is late in coming to say good-night."

"No doubt he is attending to Jovial."

"That makes me think that we did not bid good-night to dear old Jovial."

"I am sorry for it."

"Poor beast! he seems so glad when he licks our hands. One would think that he thanked us for our visit."

"Luckily, Dagobert will have wished him good-night for us."

"Good Dagobert! he is always thinking of us. How he spoils us! We remain idle, and he has all the trouble."

"How can we prevent it?"

"What a pity that we are not rich, to give him a little rest."

"We rich! Alas, my sister! we shall never be anything but poor orphans."

"Oh, there's the medal!"

"Doubtless, there is some hope attached to it, else we should not have made this long journey."

"Dagobert has promised to tell us all, this evening."

She was prevented from continuing, for two of the window-panes flew to pieces with a loud crash.

The orphans, with a cry of terror, threw themselves into each other's arms, whilst the dog rushed towards the window, barking furiously.

Pale, trembling, motionless with affright, clasping each other in a close embrace, the two sisters held their breath; in their extreme fear, they durst not even cast their eyes in the direction of the window. The dog, with his forepaws resting on the sill, continued to bark with violence.

"Alas! what can it be?" murmured the orphans. "And Dagobert not here!"

"Hark!" cried Rose, suddenly seizing Blanche by the arm; "hark!—some one coming up the stairs!"

"Good heaven! it does not sound like the tread of Dagobert. Do you not hear what heavy footsteps?"

"Quick! come, Spoil-sport, and defend us!" cried the two sisters at once, in an agony of alarm.

The boards of the wooden staircase really creaked beneath the weight of unusually heavy footsteps, and a singular kind of rustling was heard along the thin partition that divided the chamber from the landing-place. Then a ponderous

mass, falling against the door of the room, shook it violently; and the girls, at the very height of terror, looked at each other without the power to speak.

The door opened. It was Dagobert.

At the sight of him Rose and Blanche joyfully exchanged a kiss, as if they had just escaped from a great danger.

"What is the matter? why are you afraid?" asked the soldier in surprise.

"Oh, if you only knew!" said Rose, panting as she spoke, for both her own heart and her sister's beat with violence.

"If you knew what has just happened! We did not recognize your footsteps—they seemed so heavy—and then that noise behind the partition!"

"Little frightened doves that you are! I could not run up the stairs like a boy of fifteen, seeing that I carried my bed upon my back—a straw mattress that I have just flung down before your door, to sleep there as usual."

"Bless me! how foolish we must be, sister, not to have thought of that!" said Rose, looking at Blanche. And their pretty faces, which had together grown pale, together resumed their natural color.

During this scene the dog, still resting against the window, did not cease barking a moment.

"What makes Spoil-sport bark in that direction, my children?" said the soldier.

"We do not know. Two of our window panes have just been broken. That is what first frightened us so much."

Without answering a word Dagobert flew to the window, opened it quickly, pushed back the shutter, and leaned out.

He saw nothing; it was dark night. He listened; but heard only the moaning of the wind.

"Spoil-sport," said he to his dog, pointing to the open window, "leap out, old fellow, and search!" The faithful animal took one mighty spring and disappeared by the window, raised only about eight feet above the ground.

Dagobert, still leaning over, encouraged his dog with voice and gesture: "Search, old fellow, search! If there is any one there, pin him—your fangs are strong—and hold him fast till I come."

But Spoil-sport found no one. They heard him go backwards and forwards, snuffing on every side, and now and then uttering a low cry like a hound at fault.

"There is no one, my good dog, that's clear, or you would have had him by the throat ere this." Then, turning to the maidens, who listened to his words and watched his move-

ments with uneasiness: "My girls," said he, "how were these panes broken? Did you not remark?"

"No, Dagobert; we were talking together when we heard a great crash, and then the glass fell into the room."

"It seemed to me," added Rose, "as if a shutter had struck suddenly against the window."

Dagobert examined the shutter, and observed a long movable hook, designed to fasten it on the inside.

"It blows hard," said he; "the wind must have swung round the shutter, and this hook broke the window. Yes, yes; that is it. What interest could anybody have to play such a sorry trick?" Then, speaking to Spoil-sport, he asked, "Well, my good fellow, is there no one?"

The dog answered by a bark, which the soldier no doubt understood as a negative, for he continued: "Well, then, come back!—Make the round—you will find some door open—you are never at a loss."

The animal followed this advice. After growling for a few seconds beneath the window, he set off at a gallop to make the circuit of the buildings, and come back by the court-yard.

"Be quite easy, my children!" said the soldier, as he again drew near the orphans; "it was only the wind."

"We were a good deal frightened," said Rose.

"I believe you. But now I think of it, this draught is likely to give you cold." And seeking to remedy this inconvenience, he took from a chair the reindeer pelisse, and suspended it from the spring-catch of the curtainless window, using the skirts to stop up as closely as possible the two openings made by the breaking of the panes.

"Thanks, Dagobert, how good you are! We were very uneasy at not seeing you."

"Yes, you were absent longer than usual. But what is the matter with you?" added Rose, only just then perceiving that his countenance was disturbed and pallid, for he was still under the painful influence of the brawl with Morok; "how pale you are!"

"Me, my pets?—Oh, nothing."

"Yes, I assure you, your countenance is quite changed. Rose is right."

"I tell you there is nothing the matter," answered the soldier, not without some embarrassment, for he was little used to deceive; till, finding an excellent excuse for his emotion, he added: "If I do look at all uncomfortable, it is your fright that has made me so, for indeed it was my fault."

"Your fault!"

"Yes; for if I had not lost so much time at supper, I should have been here when the window was broken, and have spared you the fright."

"Anyhow, you are here now, and we think no more of it."

"Why don't you sit down?"

"I will, my children, for we have to talk together," said Dagobert, as he drew a chair close to the head of the bed. "Now tell me, are you quite awake?" he added, trying to smile in order to reassure them. "Are those large eyes properly open?"

"Look, Dagobert!" cried the two girls, smiling in their turn, and opening their blue eyes to the utmost extent.

"Well, well," said the soldier, "they are yet far enough, from shutting; besides, it is only nine o'clock."

"We also have something to tell, Dagobert," resumed Rose, after exchanging glances with her sister.

"Indeed!"

"A secret to tell you."

"A secret?"

"Yes, to be sure."

"Ah, and a very great secret!" added Rose, quite seriously.

"A secret which concerns us both," resumed Blanche.

"Faith! I should think so. What concerns the one always concerns the other. Are you not always, as the saying goes, 'two faces under one hood?'"

"Truly, how can it be otherwise, when you put our heads under the great hood of your pelisse?" said Rose, laughing.

"There they are again, mocking-birds! One never has the last word with them. Come, ladies, your secret, since a secret there is."

"Speak, sister," said Rose.

"No, miss, it is for you to speak. You are to-day on duty, as eldest, and such an important thing as telling a secret like that you talk of belongs of right to the elder sister. Come, I am listening to you," added the soldier, as he forced a smile, the better to conceal from the maidens how much he still felt the unpunished affronts of the brute-tamer.

It was Rose (who, as Dagobert said, was doing duty as eldest) that spoke for herself and for her sister.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET.

"First of all, good Dagobert," said Rose, in a gracefully caressing manner, "as we are going to tell our secret—you must promise not to scold us."

"You will not scold your darlings, will you?" added Blanche, in a no less coaxing voice.

"Granted!" replied Dagobert gravely; "particularly as I should not well know how to set about it—but why should I scold you?"

"Because we ought perhaps to have told you sooner what we are going to tell you."

"Listen, my children," said Dagobert sententiously, after reflecting a moment on this case of conscience; "one of two things must be. Either you were right, or else you were wrong, to hide this from me. If you were right, very well; if you were wrong, it is done: so let's say no more about it. Go on—I am all attention."

Completely reassured by this luminous decision, Rose resumed, while she exchanged a smile with her sister: "Only think, Dagobert; for two successive nights we have had a visitor."

"A visitor!" cried the soldier, drawing himself up suddenly in his chair.

"Yes, a charming visitor—he is so very fair."

"Fair!—the devil!" cried Dagobert, with a start.

"Yes, fair—and with blue eyes," added Blanche.

"Blue eyes—blue devils!" and Dagobert again bounded on his seat.

"Yes, blue eyes—as long as that," resumed Rose, placing the tip of one forefinger about the middle of the other.

"Zounds! they might be as long as that," said the veteran, indicating the whole length of his arm from the elbow—"they might be as long as that, and it would have nothing to do with it. Fair, and with blue eyes. Pray what may this mean, young ladies?" and Dagobert rose from his seat with a severe and painfully unquiet look.

"There now, Dagobert, you have begun to scold us already!"

"Just at the very commencement," added Blanche.

"Commencement! — what, is there to be a sequel? a finish?"

"A finish? we hope not," said Rose, laughing like mad.

"All we ask is, that it should last forever," added Blanche, sharing in the hilarity of her sister.

Dagobert looked gravely from one to the other of the two maidens, as if trying to guess this enigma; but when he saw their sweet, innocent faces gracefully animated by a frank, ingenuous laugh, he reflected that they would not be so gay if they had any serious matter for self-reproach, and he felt pleased at seeing them so merry in the midst of their precarious position.

"Laugh on, my children!" he said. "I like so much to see you laugh."

Then, thinking that was not precisely the way in which he ought to treat the singular confession of the young girls, he added in a gruff voice: "Yes, I like to see you laugh—but not when you receive fair visitors with blue eyes, young ladies!—Come, acknowledge that I'm an old fool to listen to such nonsense—you are only making game of me."

"Nay, what we tell you is quite true."

"You know we never tell stories," added Rose.

"They are right—they never fib," said the soldier, in renewed perplexity. "But how the devil is such a visit possible? I sleep before your door—Spoil-sport sleeps under your window—and all the blue eyes and fair locks in the world must come in by one of those two ways—and, if they had tried it, the dog and I, who have both of us quick ears, would have received their visits after our fashion. But come, children! pray, speak to the purpose. Explain yourselves!"

The two sisters, who saw, by the expression of Dagobert's countenance, that he felt really uneasy, determined no longer to trifle with his kindness. They exchanged a glance, and Rose, taking in her little hand the coarse, broad palm of the veteran, said to him: "Come, do not plague yourself! We will tell you all about the visits of our friend, Gabriel."

"There you are again!—He has a name, then?"

"Certainly, he has a name. It is Gabriel."

"Is it not a pretty name, Dagobert? Oh, you will see and love, as we do, our beautiful Gabriel!"

"I'll love your beautiful Gabriel, will I?" said the veteran, shaking his head—"Love your beautiful Gabriel?—that's as it may be. I must first know——" Then, interrupting

himself, he added: "It is queer. That reminds me of something."

"Of what, Dagobert?"

"Fifteen years ago, in the last letter that your father, on his return from France, brought me from my wife, she told me that, poor as she was, and with our little growing Agricola on her hands, she had taken in a poor deserted child, with the face of a cherub, and the name of Gabriel—and only a short time since I heard of him again."

"And from whom, then?"

"You shall know that by and by."

"Well, then—since you have a Gabriel of your own—there is the more reason that you should love ours."

"Yours! but who is yours? I am on thorns till you tell me."

"You know, Dagobert," resumed Rose, "that Blanche and I are accustomed to fall asleep, holding each other by the hand."

"Yes, yes, I have often seen you in your cradle. I was never tired of looking at you: it was so pretty."

"Well, then—two nights ago, we had just fallen asleep, when we beheld——"

"Oh, it was in a dream!" cried Dagobert. "Since you were asleep, it was in a dream!"

"Certainly, in a dream—how else would you have it?"

"Pray let my sister go on with her tale!"

"Ah, well and good!" said the soldier with a sigh of satisfaction; "well and good! To be sure, I was tranquil enough in any case—because—but still—I like it better to be a dream. Continue, my little Rose."

"Once asleep, we both dreamt the same thing."

"What! both the same?"

"Yes, Dagobert; for the next morning when we awoke we related our two dreams to each other."

"And they were exactly alike."

"That's odd enough, my children; and what was this dream all about?"

"In our dream, Blanche and I were seated together, when we saw enter a beautiful angel, with a long white robe, fair locks, blue eyes, and so handsome and benign a countenance, that we clasped our hands as if to pray to him. Then he told us, in a soft voice, that he was called Gabriel; that our mother had sent him to be our guardian angel, and that he would never abandon us."

"And, then," added Blanche, "he took us each by the

hand, and, bending his fair face over us, looked at us for a long time in silence, with so much goodness—with so much goodness, that we could not withdraw our eyes from his."

"Yes," resumed Rose, "and his look seemed, by turns, to attract us, or to go to our hearts. At length, to our great sorrow, Gabriel quitted us, having told us that we should see him again the following night."

"And did he make his appearance?"

"Certainly. Judge with what impatience we waited the moment of sleep, to see if our friend would return, and visit us in our slumbers."

"Humph!" said Dagobert, scratching his forehead; "this reminds me, young ladies, that you kept on rubbing your eyes last evening, and pretending to be half asleep. I wager, it was all to send me away the sooner, and to get to your dream as fast as possible."

"Yes, Dagobert."

"The reason being, you could not say to me, as you would to Spoil-sport: 'Lie down, Dagobert!' Well — so your friend Gabriel came back?"

"Yes, and this time he talked to us a great deal, and gave us, in the name of our mother, such touching, such noble counsels, that the next day, Rose and I spent our whole time in recalling every word of our guardian angel—and his face, and his look——"

"This reminds me again, young ladies, that you were whispering all along the road this morning; and that when I spoke of white, you answered black."

"Yes, Dagobert, we were thinking of Gabriel."

"And, ever since, we love him as well as he loves us."

"But he is only one between both of you!"

"Was not our mother one between us?"

"And you, Dagobert—are you not also one for us both?"

"True, true! And yet, do you know, I shall finish by being jealous of that Gabriel?"

"You are our friend by day—he is our friend by night."

"Let's understand it clearly. If you talk of him all day, and dream of him all night, what will there remain for me?"

"There will remain for you your two orphans, whom you love so much," said Rose.

"And who have only you left upon earth," added Blanche, in a caressing tone.

"Humph! humph! that's right, coax the old man over! Nay, believe me, my children," added the soldier, tenderly, "I am quite satisfied with my lot. I can afford to let you

have your Gabriel. I felt sure that Spoil-sport and myself could take our rest in quiet. After all, there is nothing so astonishing in what you tell me; your first dream struck your fancy, and you talked so much about it that you had a second; nor should I be surprised if you were to see this fine fellow a third time."

"Oh, Dagobert! do not make a jest of it! They are only dreams, but we think our mother sends them to us. Did she not tell us that orphan children were watched over by guardian angels? Well, Gabriel is our guardian angel; he will protect us, and he will protect you also."

"Very kind of him to think of me; but you see, my dear children, for the matter of defence, I prefer the dog; he is less fair than your angel, but he has better teeth, and that is more to be depended on."

"How provoking you are, Dagobert—always jesting!"

"It is true; you can laugh at everything."

"Yes, I am astonishingly gay; I laugh with my teeth shut, in the style of old Jovial. Come, children, don't scold me: I know I am wrong. The remembrance of your dear mother is mixed with this dream, and you do well to speak of it seriously. Besides," added he, with a grave air, "dreams will sometimes come true. In Spain, two of the Empress's dragoons, comrades of mine, dreamt, the night before their death, that they would be poisoned by the monks—and so it happened. If you continue to dream of this fair angel Gabriel, it is—it is—why, it is, because you are amused by it; and, as you have none too many pleasures in the daytime, you may as well get an agreeable sleep at night. But, now, my children, I have also much to tell you; it will concern your mother; promise me not to be sad."

"Be satisfied! when we think of her we are not sad, though serious."

"That is well. For fear of grieving you, I have always delayed the moment of telling what your poor mother would have confided to you as soon as you were no longer children. But she died before she had time to do so, and that which I have to tell broke her heart—as it nearly did mine. I put off this communication as long as I could, taking for pretext that I would say nothing till we came to the field of battle where your father was made prisoner. That gave me time; but the moment is now come; I can shuffle it off no longer."

"We listen, Dagobert," responded the two maidens, with an attentive and melancholy air.

After a moment's silence, during which he appeared to reflect, the veteran thus addressed the young girls:

"Your father, General Simon, was the son of a workman, who remained a workman; for, notwithstanding all that the general could say or do, the old man was obstinate in not quitting his trade. He had a heart of gold and a head of iron, just like his son. You may suppose, my children, that when your father, who had enlisted as a private soldier, became a general and a count of the empire, it was not without toil or without glory."

"A count of the Empire! what is that, Dagobert?"

"Flummery—a title, which the Emperor gave over and above the promotion, just for the sake of saying to the people, whom he loved because he was one of them: 'Here, children! you wish to play at nobility! you shall be nobles. You wish to play at royalty! you shall be kings. Take what you like—nothing is too good for you—enjoy yourselves?'"

"Kings!" said the two girls, joining their hands in admiration.

"Kings of the first water. Oh, he was no niggard of his crowns, our Emperor! I had a bed-fellow of mine, a brave soldier, who was afterwards promoted to be king. This flattered us; for, if it was not one, it was the other. And so, at this game, your father became count; but, count or not, he was one of the best and bravest generals of the army."

"He was handsome, was he not, Dagobert?—mother always said so."

"Oh, yes! indeed he was—but quite another thing from your fair guardian angel. Picture to yourself a fine, dark man, who looked splendid in his full uniform, and could put fire into the soldier's hearts. With him to lead, we would have charged up into Heaven itself—that is, if Heaven had permitted it," added Dagobert, not wishing to wound in any way the religious beliefs of the orphans.

"And father was as good as he was brave, Dagobert."

"Good, my children? Yes, I should say so!—He could bend a horse-shoe in his hand as you would bend a card, and the day he was taken prisoner he had cut down the Prussian artillerymen on their very cannon. With strength and courage like that, how could he be otherwise than good? It is then about nineteen years ago, not far from this place—on the spot I showed you before we arrived at the village—that the general, dangerously wounded, fell from his horse. I was following him at the time, and ran to his assistance. Five minutes after we were made prisoners—and by whom think you?—by a Frenchman."

"A Frenchman?"

"Yes, an emigrant marquis, a colonel in the service of Russia," answered Dagobert, with bitterness. "And so, when this marquis advanced towards us, and said to the general: 'Surrender, sir, to a countryman!'—'A Frenchman, who fights against France,' replied the general, 'is no longer my countryman; he is a traitor, and I'd never surrender to a traitor!' And, wounded though he was, he dragged himself up to a Russian grenadier, and delivered him his sabre, saying: 'I surrender to you my brave fellow!' The marquis became pale with rage at it."

The orphans looked at each other with pride, and a rich crimson mantled their cheeks, as they exclaimed: "Oh, our brave father!"

"Ah, those children," said Dagobert, as he proudly twirled his moustache. "One sees they have soldier's blood in their veins! Well," he continued, "we were now prisoners. The general's last horse had been killed under him; and, to perform the journey, he mounted Jovial, who had not been wounded that day. We arrived at Warsaw, and there it was that the general first saw your mother. She was called the *Pearl of Warsaw;* that is saying everything. Now he, who admired all that is good and beautiful, fell in love with her almost immediately; and she loved him in return; but her parents had promised her to another—and that other was the same——"

Dagobert was unable to proceed. Rose uttered a piercing cry, and pointed in terror to the window.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAVELLER.

Upon the cry of the young girl, Dagobert rose abruptly.

"What is the matter, Rose?"

"There—there!" she said, pointing to the window. "I thought I saw a hand move the pelisse."

She had not concluded these words before Dagobert rushed to the window and opened it, tearing down the mantle which had been suspended from the fastening.

It was still dark night, and the wind was blowing hard. The soldier listened, but could hear nothing.

Returning to fetch the lamp from the table, he shaded

the flame with his hand, and strove to throw the light outside. Still he saw nothing. Persuaded that a gust of wind had disturbed and shaken the pelisse, and that Rose had been deceived by her own fears, he again shut the window.

"Be satisfied, children! The wind is very high; it is that which lifted the corner of the pelisse."

"Yet methought I saw plainly the fingers which had hold of it," said Rose, still trembling.

"I was looking at Dagobert," said Blanche, "and I saw nothing."

"There was nothing to see, my children; the thing is clear enough. The window is at least eight feet above the ground; none but a giant could reach it without a ladder. Now, had any one used a ladder, there would not have been time to remove it; for, as soon as Rose cried out, I ran to the window, and, when I held out the light. I could see nothing."

"I must have been deceived," said Rose.

"You may be sure, sister, it was only the wind," added Blanche.

"Then I beg pardon for having disturbed you, my good Dagobert."

"Never mind!" replied the soldier musingly; "I am only sorry that Spoil-sport is not come back. He would have watched the window, and that would have quite tranquillized you. But he no doubt scented the stable of his comrade, Jovial, and will have called in to bid him good-night on the road. I have half a mind to go and fetch him."

"Oh, no, Dagobert! do not leave us alone," cried the maidens; "we are too much afraid."

"Well, the dog is not likely to remain away much longer, and I am sure we shall soon hear him scratching at the door, so we will continue our story," said Dagobert, as he again seated himself near the head of the bed, but this time with his face towards the window.

"Now the general was prisoner at Warsaw," continued he, "and in love with your mother, whom they wished to marry to another. In 1814, we learned the finish of the war, the banishment of the Emperor to the Isle of Elba, and the return of the Bourbons. In concert with the Prussians and Russians, who had brought them back, they had exiled the Emperor. Learning all this, your mother said to the general: 'The war is finished; you are free, but your Emperor is in trouble. You owe everything to him; go and join him in his misfortunes. I know not when we shall meet again,

but I shall never marry any one but you, I am yours till death!'—Before he set out the general called me to him, and said: 'Dagobert, remain here; Mademoiselle Eva may have need of you to fly from her family, if they should press too hard upon her; our correspondence will have to pass through your hands; at Paris, I shall see your wife and son; I will comfort them, and tell them you are my friend."

"Always the same," said Rose, with emotion, as she looked affectionately at Dagobert.

"As faithful to the father and mother as to their children," added Blanche.

"To love one was to love them all," replied the soldier. "Well, the general joined the Emperor at Elba; I remained at Warsaw, concealed in the neighborhood of your mother's house; I received the letters, and conveyed them to her clandestinely. In one of those letters—I feel proud to tell you of it, my children—the general informed me that the Emperor himself had remembered me."

"What, did he know you?"

"A little, I flatter myself—'Oh! Dagobert!' said he to your father, who was talking to him about me; 'a horse-grenadier of my old guard—a soldier of Egypt and Italy, battered with wounds—an old dare-devil, whom I decorated with my own hand at Wagram—I have not forgotten him!' —I vow, children, when your mother read that to me, I cried like a fool."

"The Emperor—what a fine golden face he has on the silver cross with the red ribbon that you would sometimes show us when we behaved well!"

"That cross—given by him—is my relic. It is there in my knapsack, with whatever we have of value—our little purse and papers. But, to return to your mother; it was a great consolation to her, when I took her letters from the general, or talked with her about him—for she suffered much—oh, so much! In vain her parents tormented and persecuted her; she always answered: 'I will never marry any one but General Simon.' A spirited woman, I can tell you—resigned, but wonderfully courageous. One day she received a letter from the general; he had left the Isle of Elba with the Emperor; the war had again broken out, a short campaign, but as fierce as ever, and heightened by soldiers' devotion. In that campaign of France, my children, especially at Montmirail, your father fought like a lion, and his division followed his example. It was no longer valor—it was frenzy. He told me that, in Cham-

pagne, the peasants killed so many of those Prussians, that their fields were manured with them for years. Men, women, children, all rushed upon them. Pitchforks, stones, mattocks, all served for the slaughter. It was a true wolf-hunt!"

The veins swelled on the soldier's forehead, and his cheeks flushed as she spoke, for this popular heroism recalled to his memory the sublime enthusiasm of the wars of the republic—those armed risings of a whole people, from which dated the first steps of his military career, as the triumphs of the Empire were the last days of his service.

The orphans, too, daughters of a soldier and a brave woman, did not shrink from the rough energy of these words, but felt their cheeks glow, and their hearts beat tumultuously.

"How happy we are to be the children of so brave a father!" cried Blanche.

"It is a happiness and an honor too, my children—for the evening of the battle of Montmirail, the Emperor, to the joy of the whole army, made your father Duke of Ligny and Marshal of France."

"Marshal of France!" said Rose in astonishment, without understanding the exact meaning of the words.

"Duke of Ligny!" added Blanche with equal surprise.

"Yes; Peter Simon, the son of a workman, became duke and marshal—there is nothing higher except a king!" resumed Dagobert, proudly. "That's how the Emperor treated the sons of the people, and, therefore, the people were devoted to him. It was all very fine to tell them: 'Your Emperor makes you food for cannon.' 'Stuff!' replied the people, who are no fools, 'another would make us food for misery. We prefer the cannon, with the chance of becoming captain or colonel, marshal, king—or invalid; that's better than to perish with hunger, cold, and age, on straw in a garret, after toiling forty years for others.'"

"Even in France—even in Paris, that beautiful city—do you mean to say there are poor people who die of hunger and misery, Dagobert?"

"Even in Paris? Yes, my children; therefore, I come back to the point—the cannon is better. With it, one has the chance of becoming, like your father, duke and marshal: when I say duke and marshal, I am partly right and partly wrong, for the title and the rank were not recognized in the end; because, after Montmirail, came a day of gloom, a day of great mourning, when, as the general has told me, old

soldiers like myself wept—yes, wept!—on the evening of a battle. That day, my children, was Waterloo!"

There was in these simple words of Dagobert an expression of such deep sorrow, that it thrilled the hearts of the orphans.

"Alas!" resumed the soldier, with a sigh, "there are days which seem to have a curse on them. That same day, at Waterloo, the general fell, covered with wounds, at the head of a division of the Guards. When he was nearly cured, which was not for a long time, he solicited permission to go to St. Helena—another island at the far end of the world, to which the English had carried the Emperor, to torture him at their leisure; for if he was very fortunate in the first instance, he had to go through a deal of hard rubs at last, my poor children."

"If you talk in that way, you will make us cry, Dagobert."

"There is cause enough for it—the Emperor suffered so much! He bled cruelly at the heart, believe me. Unfortunately, the general was not with him at St. Helena; he would have been one more to console him; but they would not allow him to go. Then, exasperated, like so many others, against the Bourbons, the general engaged in a conspiracy to recall the son of the Emperor. He relied especially on one regiment, nearly all composed of his old soldiers, and he went down to a place in Picardy, where they were then in garrison; but the conspiracy had already been divulged. Arrested the moment of his arrival, the general was taken before the colonel of the regiment. And this colonel," said the soldier, after a brief pause, "who do you think it was again? Bah! it would be too long to tell you all, and would only make you more sad; but it was a man whom your father had many reasons to hate. When he found himself face to face with him, he said: 'if you are not a coward, you will give me one hour's liberty, and we will fight to the death; I hate you for this, I despise you for that'—and so on. The colonel accepted the challenge, and gave your father his liberty till the morrow. The duel was a desperate one; the colonel was left for dead on the spot."

"Merciful heaven!"

"The general was yet wiping his sword, when a faithful friend came to him, and told him he had only just time to save himself. In fact, he happily succeeded in leaving France—yes, happily—for a fortnight after, he was condemned to death as a conspirator."

"What misfortunes, good heaven!"

"There was some luck, however, in the midst of his troubles. Your mother had kept her promise bravely, and was still waiting for him. She had written to him: 'The Emperor first, and me next!' Not able to do anything more for the Emperor, nor even for his son, the general, banished from France, set out for Warsaw. Your mother had lost her parents, and was now free; they were married—and I am one of the witnesses to the marriage."

"You are right, Dagobert; that was great happiness in the midst of great misfortunes!"

"Yes, they were very happy; but, as it happened with all good hearts, the happier they were themselves, the more they felt for the sorrows of others—and there was quite enough to grieve them at Warsaw. The Russians had again begun to treat the Poles as their slaves; your brave mother, though of French origin, was a Pole in heart and soul; she spoke out boldly what others did not dare speak in a whisper, and all the unfortunate called her their protecting angel. That was enough to excite the suspicions of the Russian governor. One day, a friend of the general's, formerly a colonel in the lancers, a brave and worthy man, was condemned to be exiled to Siberia, for a military plot against the Russians. He took refuge in your father's house, and lay hid there; but his retreat was discovered. During the next night, a party of Cossacks, commanded by an officer, and followed by a travelling-carriage, arrive at our door; they rouse the general from his sleep and take him away with them."

"Oh, heaven! what did they mean to do with him?"

"Conduct him out of the Russian dominions, with a charge never to return, on pain of perpetual imprisonment. His last words were: 'Dagobert, I entrust to thee my wife and child!'—for it wanted yet some months of the time when you were to be born. Well, notwithstanding that, they exiled your mother to Siberia; it was an opportunity to get rid of her; she did too much good at Warsaw, and they feared her accordingly. Not content with banishing her, they confiscated all her property; the only favor she could obtain was, that I should accompany her, and, had it not been for Jovial, whom the general had given to me, she would have had to make the journey on foot. It was thus, with her on horseback, and I leading her as I lead you, my children, that we arrived at the poverty-stricken village, where, three months after, you poor little things were born!"

"And our father?"

"It was impossible for him to return to Russia; impossible for your mother to think of flight, with two children; impossible for the general to write to her, as he knew not where she was."

"So, since that time, you have had no news of him?"

"Yes, my children—once we had news."

"And by whom?"

After a moment's silence, Dagobert resumed with a singular expression of countenance: "By whom?—by one who is not like other men. Yes—that you may understand me better, I will relate to you an extraordinary adventure, which happened to your father during his last French campaign. He had been ordered by the Emperor to carry a battery, which was playing heavily on our army; after several unsuccessful efforts, the general put himself at the head of a regiment of cuirassiers, and charged the battery, intending, as was his custom, to cut down the men at their guns. He was on horseback, just before the mouth of a cannon, where all the artillerymen had been either killed or wounded, when one of them still found strength to raise himself upon one knee, and to apply the lighted match to the touch-hole—and that when your father was about ten paces in front of the loaded piece."

"Oh! what a peril for our father!"

"Never, he told me, had he run such imminent danger—for he saw the artilleryman apply the match, and the gun go off—but, at the very nick, a man of tall stature, dressed as a peasant, and whom he had not before remarked, threw himself in front of the cannon."

"Unfortunate creature! what a horrible death!"

"Yes," said Dagobert, thoughtfully; "it should have been so. He ought by rights to have been blown into a thousand pieces. But no—nothing of the kind!"

"What do you tell us?"

"What the general told me. 'At the moment when the gun went off,' as he often repeated to me, 'I shut my eyes by an involuntary movement, that I might not see the mutilated body of the poor wretch who had sacrificed himself in my place. When I again opened them, the first thing I saw in the midst of the smoke, was the tall figure of this man, standing erect and calm on the same spot, and casting a sad mild look on the artilleryman, who, with one knee on the ground, and his body thrown backward, gazed on him with as much terror as if he had been the devil in person. After-

wards, in the tumult of the battle, I lost sight of this man," added your father.

"Bless me, Dagobert! how can this be possible?"

"That is just what I said to the general. He answered me, that he had never been able to explain to himself this event, which seemed as incredible as it was true. Moreover, your father must have been greatly struck with the countenance of this man, who appeared, he said, about thirty years of age—for he remarked, that his extremely black eyebrows were joined together, and formed, as it were, one line from temple to temple, so that he seemed to have a black streak across his forehead. Remember this, my children; you will soon see why."

"Oh, Dagobert! we shall not forget it," said the orphans, becoming more and more astonished as he proceeded.

"Is it not strange—this man with a black seam on his forehead?"

"Well, you shall hear. The general had, as I told you, been left for dead at Waterloo. During the night which he passed on the field of battle, in a sort of delirium brought on by the fever of his wounds, he saw, or fancied he saw, this same man bending over him, with a look of great mildness and deep melancholy, stanching his wounds, and using every effort to revive him. But as your father, whose senses were still wandering, repulsed his kindness—saying, that after such a defeat, it only remained to die—it appeared as if this man replied to him: 'You must live for Eva!'—meaning your mother, whom the general had left at Warsaw, to join the Emperor, and make this campaign of France."

"How strange, Dagobert!—And since then, did our father never see this man?"

"Yes, he saw him—for it was he who brought news of the general to your poor mother."

"When was that? We never heard of it."

"You remember that, on the day your mother died, you went to the pine-forest with old Fedora?"

"Yes," answered Rose, mournfully; "to fetch some heath, of which our mother was so fond."

"Poor mother!" added Blanche; "she appeared so well that morning, that we could not dream of the calamity which awaited us before night."

"True, my children; I sang and worked that morning in the garden, expecting, no more than you did, what was to happen. Well, as I was singing at my work, on a sudden I

heard a voice ask me in French: 'Is this the village of Milosk?'—I turned round, and saw before me a stranger; I looked at him attentively, and, instead of replying, fell back two steps, quite stupefied."

"Ah, why?"

"He was of tall stature, very pale, with a high and open forehead; but his eyebrows met, and seemed to form one black streak across it."

"Then it was the same man who had twice been with our father in battle?"

"Yes—it was he."

"But, Dagobert," said Rose, thoughtfully, "is it not a long time since these battles?"

"About sixteen years."

"And of what age was this stranger?"

"Hardly more than thirty."

"Then how can it be the same man, who sixteen years before, had been with our father in the wars?"

"You are right," said Dagobert, after a moment's silence, and shrugging his shoulders: "I may have been deceived by a chance likeness—and yet——"

"Or, if it were the same, he could not have got older all that while."

"But did you ask him, if he had not formerly relieved our father?"

"At first I was so surprised that I did not think of it; and afterwards, he remained so short a time, that I had no opportunity. Well, he asked me for the village of Milosk. 'You are there, sir,' said I, 'but how do you know that I am a Frenchman?' 'I heard you singing as I passed,' replied he; 'could you tell me the house of Madame Simon, the general's wife?' 'She lives here, sir.' Then looking at me for some seconds in silence, he took me by the hand and said: 'You are the friend of General Simon—his best friend?' Judge of my astonishment, as I answered: 'But, sir, how do you know?' 'He has often spoken of you with gratitude.' 'You have seen the general then?' 'Yes, some time ago, in India. I am also his friend: I bring news of him to his wife, whom I knew to be exiled in Siberia. At Tobolsk, whence I come, I learned that she inhabits this village. Conduct me to her!'"

"The good traveller—I love him already," said Rose.

"Yes, being father's friend."

"I begged him to wait an instant, whilst I went to inform your mother, so that the surprise might not do her harm; five minutes after, he was beside her."

"And what kind of man was this traveller, Dagobert?"

"He was very tall; he wore a dark pelisse, and a fur cap, and had long black hair."

"Was he handsome?"

"Yes, my children—very handsome; but with so mild and melancholy an air, that it pained my heart to see him."

"Poor man! he had doubtless known some great sorrow."

"Your mother had been closeted with him for some minutes, when she called me to her and said that she had just received good news of the general. She was in tears, and had before her a large packet of papers; it was a kind of journal, which your father had written every evening to console himself; not being able to speak to her, he told the paper all that he would have told her."

"Oh! where are these papers, Dagobert?"

"There, in the knapsack, with my cross and our purse. One day I will give them to you: but I have picked out a few leaves here and there for you to read presently. You will see why."

"Had our father been long in India?"

"I gathered from the few words which your mother said, that the general had gone to that country, after fighting for the Greeks against the Turks—for he always liked to side with the weak against the strong. In India he made fierce war against the English, they had murdered our prisoners in pontoons, and tortured the Emperor at St. Helena, and the war was a doubly good one, for in harming them he served a just cause."

"What cause did he serve then?"

"That of one of the poor native princes, whose territories the English lay waste, till the day when they can take possession of them against law and right. You see, my children, it was once more the weak against the strong, and your father did not miss this opportunity. In a few months he had so well-trained and disciplined the twelve or fifteen thousand men of the prince, that, in two encounters, they cut to pieces the English sent against them, and who, no doubt, had in their reckoning left out your brave father, my children. But come, you shall read some pages of his journal, which will tell you more and better than I can. Moreover, you will find in them a name which you ought always to remember; that's why I chose this passage."

"Oh, what happiness! To read the pages written by our father, is almost to hear him speak," said Rose.

"It is as if he were close beside us," added Blanche.

And the girls stretched out their hands with eagerness, to catch hold of the leaves that Dagobert had taken from his pocket. Then, by a simultaneous movement, full of touching grace, they pressed the writing of their father in silence to their lips.

"You will see also, my children, at the end of this letter, why I was surprised that your guardian angel, as you say, should be called Gabriel. Read, read," added the soldier, observing the puzzled air of the orphans. "Only I ought to tell you, that, when he wrote this, the general had not yet fallen in with the traveller who brought the papers."

Rose, sitting up in her bed, took the leaves, and began to read in a soft and trembling voice, Blanche, with her head resting on her sister's shoulder, followed attentively every word. One could even see, by the slight motion of her lips, that she too was reading, but only to herself.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXTRACTS FROM GENERAL SIMON'S DIARY.

Bivouac on the Mountains of Ava, February the 20th, 1830.

"EACH time I add some pages to this journal, written now in the heart of India, where the fortune of my wandering and proscribed existence has thrown me—a journal which, alas! my beloved Eva, you may never read—I experience a sweet, yet painful emotion; for, although to converse thus with you is a consolation, it brings back the bitter thought that I am unable to see or speak to you.

"Still, if these pages should ever meet your eyes, your generous heart will throb at the name of the intrepid being, to whom I am this day indebted for my life, and to whom I may thus perhaps owe the happiness of seeing you again—you and my child—for of course our child lives. Yes, it must be—for else, poor wife, what an existence would be yours amid the horrors of exile! Dear soul! he must now be fourteen. Whom does he resemble? Is he like you? Has he your large and beautiful blue eyes?—Madman that I am! how many times, in this long day-book, have I already asked the same idle question, to which you can return no answer!—How many times shall I continue to ask it?—But you will teach our child to speak and love the somewhat savage name of *Djalma*."

"Djalma!" said Rose, as with moist eyes she left off reading.

"Djalma!" repeated Blanche, who shared the emotion of her sister. "Oh, we shall never forget that name."

"And you will do well, my children; for it seems to be the name of a famous soldier, though a very young one. But go on, my little Rose!"

"I have told you in the preceding pages, my dear Eva, of the two glorious days we had this month. The troops of my old friend, the prince, which daily make fresh advances in European discipline, have performed wonders. We have beaten the English, and obliged them to abandon a portion of this unhappy country, which they had invaded in contempt of all the rights of justice, and which they continue to ravage without mercy, for, in these parts, warfare is another name for treachery, pillage, and massacre. This morning, after a toilsome march through a rocky and mountainous district, we received information from our scouts, that the enemy had been reinforced, and was preparing to act on the offensive; and, as we were separated from them by a distance of a few leagues only, an engagement became inevitable. My old friend the prince, the father of my deliverer, was impatient to march to the attack. The action began about three o'clock; it was very bloody and furious. Seeing that our men wavered for a moment, for they were inferior in number, and the English reinforcements consisted of fresh troops, I charged at the head of our weak reserve of cavalry. The old prince was in the centre, fighting, as he always fights, intrepidly; his son, Djalma, scarcely eighteen, as brave as his father, did not leave my side. In the hottest part of the engagement, my horse was killed under me, and rolling over into a ravine, along the edge of which I was riding, I found myself so awkwardly entangled beneath him, that for an instant I thought my thigh was broken."

"Poor father!" said Blanche.

"This time, happily, nothing more dangerous ensued—thanks to Djalma! You see, Dagobert," added Rose, "that I remember the name." And she continued to read:

"The English thought—and a very flattering opinion it was—that, if they could kill me, they would make short work of the prince's army. So a Sepoy officer, with five or six irregulars—cowardly, ferocious plunderers—seeing me roll down the ravine, threw themselves into it to despatch me. Surrounded by fire and smoke, and carried away by their

ardor, our mountaineers had not seen me fall: but Djalma never left me. He leaped into the ravine to my assistance, and his cool intrepidity saved my life. He had held the fire of his double-barrelled carbine; with one load, he killed the officer on the spot; with the other he broke the arm of an irregular, who had already pierced my left hand with his bayonet. But do not be alarmed, dear Eva; it is nothing—only a scratch."

"Wounded—again wounded—alas!" cried Blanche, clasping her hands together, and interrupting her sister.

"Take courage!" said Dagobert: "I dare say it was only a scratch, as the general calls it. Formerly, he used to call wounds, which did not disable a man from fighting, blank wounds. There was no one like him for such sayings."

"Djalma, seeing me wounded," resumed Rose, wiping her eyes, "made use of his heavy carbine as a club, and drove back the soldiers. At that instant, I perceived a new assailant, who, sheltered behind a clump of bamboos which commanded the ravine, slowly lowered his long gun, placed the barrel between two branches, and took deliberate aim at Djalma. Before my shouts could apprise him of his danger, the brave youth had received a ball in his breast. Feeling himself hit, he fell back involuntarily two paces, and dropped upon one knee: but he still remained firm, endeavoring to cover me with his body. You may conceive my rage and despair, whilst all my efforts to disengage myself were paralyzed by the excruciating pain in my thigh. Powerless and disarmed, I witnessed for some moments this unequal struggle.

"Djalma was losing blood rapidly; his strength of arm began to fail him; already one of the irregulars, inciting his comrades with his voice, drew from his belt a huge, heavy kind of bill-hook, when a dozen of our mountaineers made their appearance, borne towards the spot by the irresistible current of the battle. Djalma was rescued in his turn, I was released, and, in a quarter of an hour, I was able to mount a horse. The fortune of the day is ours, though with severe loss; but the fires of the English camp are still visible, and to-morrow the conflict will be decisive. Thus, my beloved Eva, I owe my life to this youth. Happily, his wound occasions us no uneasiness; the ball only glanced along the ribs in a slanting direction."

"The brave boy might have said: 'A blank wound,' like the general," observed Dagobert.

"Now, my dear Eva," continued Rose, "you must become

acquainted, by means of this narrative at least, with the intrepid Djalma. He is but just eighteen. With one word, I will paint for you his noble and valiant nature; it is a custom of this country to give surnames, and, when only fifteen, he was called 'The Generous'—by which was, of course, meant generous in heart and mind. By another custom, no less touching than whimsical, this name has reverted to his parent, who is called 'The Father of the Generous,' and who might, with equal propriety, be called 'The Just,' for this old Indian is a rare example of chivalrous honor and proud independence. He might, like so many other poor princes of this country, have humbled himself before the execrable despotism of the English, bargained for the relinquishment of sovereign power, and submitted to brute force—but it was not in his nature. 'My whole rights, or a grave in my native mountains!'—such is his motto. And this is no empty boast; it springs from the conviction of what is right and just. 'But you will be crushed in the struggle,' I have said to him.—'My friend,' he answered, 'what if, to force you to a disgraceful act, you were told to yield or die?'—From that day I understood him, and have devoted myself, mind and body, to the ever sacred cause of the weak against the strong. You see, my Eva, that Djalma shows himself worthy of such a father. This young Indian is so proud, so heroic in his bravery, that, like a young Greek of Leonidas' age, he fights with his breast bare; while other warriors of his country (who, indeed, usually have arms, breast, and shoulders uncovered) wear, in time of battle, a thick, impenetrable vest. The rash daring of this youth reminds me of Murat, King of Naples, who, I have so often told you, I have seen a hundred times leading the most desperate charges with nothing but a riding-whip in his hand."

"That's another of those kings I was telling you of, whom the Emperor set up for his amusement," said Dagobert. "I once saw a Prussian officer prisoner, whose face had been cut across by that mad-cap King of Naples' riding-whip; the mark was there, a black and blue stripe. The Prussian swore he was dishonored, and that a sabre-cut would have been preferable. I should rather think so! That devil of a king; he only had one idea: 'Forward, on to the cannon!' As soon as they began to cannonade, one would have thought the guns were calling him with all their might, for he was soon up to them with his 'Here I am!' If I speak to you about him, my children, it's because he was fond of repeat-

ing; 'No one can break through a square of infantry, if General Simon or I can't do it.'"

Rose continued:

"I have observed with pain, that, notwithstanding his youth, Djalma is often subject to fits of deep melancholy. At times, I have seen him exchange with his father looks of singular import. In spite of our mutual attachment, I believe that both conceal from me some sad family secret, in so far as I can judge from expressions which have dropped from them by chance.

"It relates to some strange event, which their vivid imaginations have invested with a supernatural character.

"And yet, my love, you and I have no longer the right to smile at the credulity of others. I, since the French campaign, when I met with that extraordinary adventure, which, to this day, I am quite unable to understand——"

"This refers to the man who threw himself before the mouth of the cannon," said Dagobert.

"And you," continued the maiden, still reading, "you, my dear Eva, since the visits of that young and beautiful woman, whom, as your mother asserted, she had seen at her mother's house forty years before."

The orphans, in amazement, looked at the soldier.

"Your mother never spoke to me of that, nor the general either, my children; this is as strange to me as it is to you."

With increasing excitement and curiosity, Rose continued:

"After all, my dear Eva, things which appear very extraordinary, may often be explained by a chance resemblance or a freak of nature. Marvels being always the result of optical illusion or heated fancy, a time must come, when that which appeared to be superhuman or supernatural, will prove to be the most simple and natural event in the world. I doubt not, therefore, that the things, which we denominate our prodigies, will one day receive this commonplace solution."

"You see, my children—things appear marvellous, which at bottom are quite simple—though for a long time we understand nothing about them."

"As our father relates this, we must believe it, and not be astonished—eh, sister?"

"Yes, truly—since it will all be explained one day."

"For example," said Dagobert, after a moment's reflection, "you two are so much alike, that any one, who was not in the habit of seeing you daily, might easily take one for the other. Well! if they did not know that you are, so

to speak, 'doubles,' they might think an imp was at work instead of such good little angels as you are."

"You are right, Dagobert: in this way many things may be explained, even as our father says." And Rose continued to read:

"Not without pride, my gentle Eva, have I learned that Djalma has French blood in his veins. His father married, some years ago, a young girl, whose family, of French origin, had long been settled at Batavia in the island of Java. This similarity of circumstances between my old friend and myself—for your family also, my Eva, is of French origin, and long settled in a foreign land—has only served to augment my sympathy for him. Unfortunately, he has long had to mourn the loss of the wife whom he adored.

"See, my beloved Eva! my hand trembles as I write these words. I am weak—I am foolish—but, alas! my heart sinks within me. If such a misfortune were to happen to me—Oh, my God!—what would become of our child without thee—without his father—in that barbarous country? But no! the very fear is madness; and yet what a horrible torture is uncertainty! Where may you now be? What are you doing? What has become of you? Pardon these black thoughts, which are sometimes too much for me. They are the cause of my worst moments—for, when free from them, I can at least say to myself: I am proscribed, I am every way unfortunate—but, at the other end of the world, two hearts still beat for me with affection—yours, my Eva, and our child's!"

Rose could hardly finish this passage; for some seconds her voice was broken by sobs. There was indeed a fatal coincidence between the fears of General Simon and the sad reality; and what could be more touching than these outpourings of the heart, written by the light of a watch-fire, on the eve of battle, by a soldier who thus sought to soothe the pangs of a separation, which he felt bitterly, but knew not would be eternal?

"Poor general! he is unaware of our misfortune," said Dagobert, after a moment's silence; "but neither has he heard that he has two children, instead of one. That will be at least some consolation. But come, Blanche; do go on reading: I fear that this dwelling on grief fatigues your sister, and she is too much affected by it. Besides, after all, it is only just, that you should take your share of its pleasure and its sorrow."

Blanche took the letter, and Rose, having dried her eyes,

laid in her turn her sweet head on the shoulder of her sister, who thus continued:

"I am calmer now, my dear Eva; I left off writing for a moment, and strove to banish those black presentiments. Let us resume our conversation! After discoursing so long about India, I will talk to you a little of Europe. Yesterday evening, one of our people (a trusty fellow) rejoined our outposts. He brought me a letter, which had arrived from France at Calcutta: at length, I have news of my father, and am no longer anxious on his account. This letter is dated in August of last year. I see by its contents, that several other letters, to which he alludes, have either been delayed or lost; for I had not received any for two years before, and was extremely uneasy about him. But my excellent father is the same as ever! Age has not weakened him; his character is as energetic, his health as robust, as in times past—still a workman, still proud of his order, still faithful to his austere republican ideas, still hoping much.

"For he says to me, 'the time is at hand,' and he underlines those words. He gives me also, as you will see, good news of the family of old Dagobert, our friend—for in truth, my dear Eva, it soothes my grief to think, that this excellent man is with you, that he will have accompanied you in your exile—for I know him—a kernel of gold beneath the rude rind of a soldier! How he must love our child!"

Here Dagobert coughed two or three times, stooped down, and appeared to be seeking on the ground the little red and blue check-handkerchief spread over his knees. He remained thus bent for some seconds, and, when he raised himself, he drew his hand across his moustache."

"How well father knows you!"

"How rightly has he guessed that you would love us!"

"Well, well, children; pass over that!—Let's come to the part where the general speaks of my little Agricola, and of Gabriel, my wife's adopted child. Poor woman! when I think that in three months perhaps—but come, child; read, read," added the old soldier, wishing to conceal his emotion.

"I still hope against hope, my dear Eva, that these pages will one day reach you, and therefore I wish to insert in them all that can be interesting to Dagobert. It will be a consolation to him, to have some news of his family. My father, who is still foreman at Mr. Hardy's, tells me that worthy man has also taken into his house the son of old Dagobert. Agricola works under my father, who is en-

chanted with him. He is, he tells me, a tall and vigorous lad, who wields the heavy forge-hammer as if it were a feather, and is light-spirited as he is intelligent and laborious. He is the best workman on the establishment; and this does not prevent him in the evening, after his hard day's work, when he returns home to his mother, whom he truly loves, from making songs and writing excellent patriotic verses. His poetry is full of fire and energy; his fellow-workmen sing no thing else, and his lays have the power to warm the coldest and the most timid hearts."

"How proud you must be of your son, Dagobert," said Rose, in admiration; "he writes songs."

"Certainly, it is all very fine—but what pleases me best is, that he is good to his mother, and that he handles the hammer with a will. As for the songs, before he makes a 'Rising of the People,' or a 'Marseillaise,' he will have had to beat a good deal of iron; but where can this rascally sweet Agricola have learned to make songs at all?—No doubt, it was at school, where he went, as you will see, with his adopted brother Gabriel."

At this name of Gabriel, which reminded them of the imaginary being whom they called their guardian angel, the curiosity of the young girls was greatly excited. With redoubled attention, Blanche continued in these words:

"The adopted brother of Agricola, the poor deserted child whom the wife of our good Dagobert so generously took in, forms, my father tells me, a great contrast with Agricola; not in heart, for they have both excellent hearts; but Gabriel is as thoughtful and melancholy as Agricola is lively, joyous, and active. Moreover, adds my father, each of them, so to speak, has the aspect which belongs to his character. Agricola is dark, tall, and strong, with a gay and bold air; Gabriel, on the contrary, is weak, fair, timid as a girl, and his face wears an expression of angelic mildness."

The orphans looked at each other in surprise; then, as they turned towards the soldier their ingenuous countenances, Rose said to him; "Have you heard, Dagobert? Father says, that your Gabriel is fair, and has the face of an angel. Why, 'tis exactly like ours!"

"Yes, yes, I heard very well; it is that which surprised me, in your dream."

"I should like to know, if he has also blue eyes," said Rose.

"As for that, my children, though the general says nothing about it, I will answer for it: your fair boys have always

blue eyes. But, blue or black, he will not use them to stare at young ladies; go on, and you will see why."

Blanche resumed:

"His face wears an expression of angelic mildness. One of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, where he went with Agricola and other children of his quarter, struck with his intelligence and good disposition, spoke of him to a person of consequence, who, becoming interested in the lad, placed him in a seminary for the clergy, and, since the last two years, Gabriel is a priest. He intends devoting himself to foreign missions, and will soon set out for America."

"Your Gabriel is a priest, it appears?" said Rose, looking at Dagobert.

"While ours is an angel," added Blanche.

"Which only proves that yours is a step higher than mine. Well, every one to his taste; there are good people in all trades; but I prefer that it should be Gabriel who has chosen the black gown. I'd rather see my boy with arms bare, hammer in hand, and a leathern apron round him, neither more nor less than your old grandfather, my children—the father of Marshal Simon, Duke of Ligny—for, after all, marshal and duke he is by the grace of the Emperor. Now finish your letter."

"Soon, alas, yes!" said Blanche; "there are only a few lines left." And she proceeded:

"Thus, my dear, loving Eva, if this journal should ever reach its destination, you will be able to satisfy Dagobert as to the position of his wife and son, whom he left for our sakes. How can we ever repay such a sacrifice? But I feel sure, that your good and generous heart will have found some means of compensation.

"Adieu!—Again adieu, for to-day, my beloved Eva; I left off writing for a moment, to visit the tent of Djalma. He slept peacefully, and his father watched beside him; with a smile, he banished my fears. This intrepid young man is no longer in any danger. May he still be spared in the combat of to-morrow! Adieu, my gentle Eva! the night is silent and calm; the fires of the bivouac are slowly dying out, and our poor mountaineers repose after this bloody day; I can hear, from hour to hour, the distant all's-well of our sentinels. Those foreign words bring back my grief; they remind me of what I sometimes forget in writing—that I am far away, separated from you and from my child! Poor, beloved beings! what will be your destiny? Ah! if I could only send you, in time, that medal, which,

by a fatal accident, I carried away with me from Warsaw, you might, perhaps, obtain leave to visit France, or at least to send our child there with Dagobert; for you know of what importance——But why add this sorrow to all the rest? Unfortunately, the years are passing away, the fatal day will arrive, and this last hope, in which I live for you, will also be taken from me: but I will not close the evening by so sad a thought. Adieu, my beloved Eva! Clasp our child to your bosom, and cover it with all the kisses which I send to both of you from the depths of exile!"

"Till to-morrow—after the battle!"

The reading of this touching letter was followed by a long silence. The tears of Rose and Blanche flowed together. Dagobert, with his head resting on his hand, was absorbed in painful reflections.

Without doors, the wind had now augmented in violence; a heavy rain began to beat on the sounding panes; the most profound silence reigned in the interior of the inn. But, whilst the daughters of General Simon were reading with such deep emotion, these fragments of their father's journal, a strange and mysterious scene transpired in the menagerie of the brute-tamer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAGES.

Morok had prepared himself. Over his deer-skin vest he had drawn the coat of mail—that steel tissue, as pliable as cloth, as hard as diamonds; next, clothing his arms and legs in their proper armor, and his feet in iron-bound buskins, and concealing all this defensive equipment under loose trousers and an ample pelisse carefully buttoned, he took in his hand a long bar of iron, white-hot, set in a wooden handle.

Though long ago daunted by the skill and energy of the Prophet, his tiger Cain, his lion Judas, and his black panther Death, had sometimes attempted, in a moment of rebellion, to try their fangs and claws on his person: but, thanks to the armor concealed beneath his pelisse, they blunted their claws upon a skin of steel, and notched their fangs upon arms or legs of iron, whilst a slight touch of

their master's metallic wand left a deep furrow in their smoking, shrivelled flesh.

Finding the inutility of their efforts, and endowed with strong memory, the beasts soon learned that their teeth and claws were powerless when directed against this invulnerable being. Hence, their terrified submission reached to such a point that, in his public representations, their master could make them crouch and cower at his feet by the least movement of a little wand covered with flame-colored paper.

The Prophet, thus armed with care, and holding in his hand the iron made hot by Goliath, descended by the trap-door of the loft into the large shed beneath, in which were deposited the cages of his animals. A mere wooden partition separated this shed from the stable that contained his horses.

A lantern, with a reflector, threw a vivid light on the cages. They were four in number. A wide iron grating formed their sides, turning at one end upon hinges like a door, so as to give ingress to the animal; the bottom of each den rested on two axle-trees and four small iron castors, so that they could easily be removed to the large covered wagon in which they were placed during a journey. One of them was empty; the other three contained, as already intimated, a panther, a tiger, and a lion.

The panther, originally from Java, seemed to merit the gloomy name of Death, by her grim, ferocious aspect. Completely black, she lay crouching and rolled up in the bottom of her cage, and her dark hues mingling with the obscurity which surrounded her, nothing was distinctly visible but fixed and glaring eyes—yellow balls of phosphoric light, which only kindled, as it were, in the night-time; for it is the nature of all the animals of the feline species to enjoy entire clearness of vision but in darkness.

The Prophet entered the stable in silence: the dark red of his long pelisse contrasted with the pale yellow of his straight hair and beard; the lantern, placed at some height above the ground, threw its rays full upon this man, and the strong light, opposed to the deep shadows around it, gave effect to the sharp proportions of his bony and savage-looking figure.

He approached the cage slowly. The white rim, which encircled his eyeball, appeared to dilate, and his look rivalled in motionless brilliancy the steadily sparkling gaze of the panther. Still crouching in the shade, she felt

already the fascination of that glance; two or three times she dropped her eyelids, with a low, angry howl; then, reopening her eyes, as if in spite of herself, she kept them fastened immovably on those of the Prophet. And now her rounded ears clung to her skull, which was flattened like a viper's; the skin of her forehead became convulsively wrinkled; she drew in her bristling, but silky muzzle, and twice silently opened her jaws, garnished with formidable fangs. From that moment a kind of magnetic connection seemed to be established between the man and the beast.

The Prophet extended his glowing bar towards the cage, and said, in a sharp, imperious tone: "Death! come here!"

The panther rose, but so dragged herself along that her belly and the bend of her legs touched the ground. She was three feet high, and nearly five in length; her elastic and fleshy spine, the sinews of her thighs as well developed as those of a race-horse, her deep chest, her enormous jutting shoulders, the nerve and muscle in her short, thick paws - all announced that this terrible animal united vigor with suppleness, and strength with agility.

Morok, with his iron wand still extended in the direction of the cage, made a step towards the panther. The panther made a stride towards the Prophet. Morok stopped; Death stopped also.

At this moment the tiger, Judas, to whom Morok's back was turned, bounded violently in his cage, as if jealous of the attention which his master paid to the panther. He growled hoarsely, and, raising his head, showed the under-part of his redoubtable triangular jaw, and his broad chest of a dirty white, with which blended the copper color, streaked with black, of his sides; his tail, like a huge red serpent, with rings of ebony, now clung to his flanks, now lashed them with a slow and continuous movement; his eyes, of a transparent, brilliant green, were fixed upon the Prophet.

Such was the influence of this man over his animals, that Judas almost immediately ceased growling, as if frightened at his own temerity; but his respiration continued loud and deep. Morok turned his face towards him, and examined him very attentively during some seconds. The panther, no longer subject to the influence of her master's look, slunk back to crouch in the shade.

A sharp cracking, in sudden breaks, like that which great animals make in gnawing hard substances, was now heard from the cage of the lion. It drew the attention of the Prophet, who, leaving the tiger, advanced towards the other den.

Nothing could be seen of the lion but his monstrous croup of a reddish yellow. His thighs were gathered under him, and his thick mane served entirely to conceal his head. But by the tension and movement of the muscles of his loins, and the curving of his backbone, it was easy to perceive that he was making violent efforts with his throat and his forepaws. The Prophet approached the cage with some uneasiness, fearing that, notwithstanding his orders, Goliath had given the lion some bones to gnaw. To assure himself of it, he said in a quick and firm voice: "Cain!"

The lion did not change his position.

"Cain! come here!" repeated Morok in a louder tone. The appeal was useless; the lion did not move, and the noise continued.

"Cain! come here!" said the Prophet a third time; but, as he pronounced these words, he applied the end of the glowing bar to the haunch of the lion.

Scarcely did the light track of smoke appear on the reddish hide of Cain, when, with a spring of incredible agility, he turned and threw himself against the grating, not crouching, but at a single bound—upright, superb, terrifying. The Prophet being at the angle of the cage, Cain, in his fury, had raised himself sideways to face his master, and, leaning his huge flank against the bars, thrust between them his enormous fore-leg, which, with his swollen muscles, was as large as Goliath's thigh.

"Cain! down!" said the Prophet, approaching briskly.

The lion did not obey immediately. His lips, curling with rage, displayed fangs as long, as large, and as pointed as the tusks of a wild boar. But Morok touched those lips with the end of the burning metal; and, as he felt the smart, followed by an unexpected summons of his master, the lion, not daring to roar, uttered a hollow growl, and his great body sank down at once in an attitude of submission and fear.

The Prophet took down the lantern to see what Cain had been gnawing. It was one of the planks from the floor of his den, which he had succeeded in tearing up, and was crunching between his teeth in the extremity of his hunger. For a few moments the most profound silence reigned in the menagerie. The Prophet, with his hands behind his back, went from one cage to the other, observing the animals with a restless, contemplative look, as if he hesitated to make between them an important and difficult choice.

From time to time he listened at the great door of the shed,

which opened on the court-yard of the inn. At length this door turned on its hinges, and Goliath appeared, his clothes dripping with water.

"Well! is it done?" said the Prophet.

"Not without trouble. Luckily, the night is dark, it blows hard, and it pours with rain."

"Then there is no suspicion?"

"None, master. Your information was good. The door of the cellar opens on the fields, just under the window of the lasses. When you whistled to let me know it was time, I crept out with a stool I had provided; I put it up against the wall, and mounted upon it; with my six feet, that made nine, and I could lean my elbows on the window-ledge; I took the shutter in one hand, and the haft of my knife in the other, and, whilst I broke two of the panes, I pushed the shutter with all my might."

"And they thought it was the wind?"

"Yes, they thought it was the wind. You see, the 'brute' is not such a brute, after all. That done, I crept back into my cellar, carrying my stool with me. In a little time, I heard the voice of the old man; it was well I had made haste."

"Yes, when I whistled to you, he had just entered the supper-room. I thought he would have been longer."

"That man's not built to remain long at supper," said the giant, contemptuously. "Some moments after the panes had been broken, the old man opened the window, and called his dog, saying: 'Jump out!' -I went and hid myself at the further end of the cellar, or that infernal dog would have scented me through the door."

"The dog is now shut up in the stable with the old man's horse. Go on!"

"When I heard them close shutter and window, I came out of my cellar, replaced my stool, and again mounted upon it. Unfastening the shutter, I opened it without noise, but the two broken panes were stopped up with the skirts of a pelisse. I heard talking, but I could see nothing; so I moved the pelisse a little, and then I could see the two lasses in bed opposite to me, and the old man sitting down with his back to where I stood."

"But the knapsack—the knapsack?—That is the most important."

"The knapsack was near the window, on a table, by the side of a lamp; I could have reached it by stretching out my arm."

"What did you hear said?"

"As you told me to think only of the knapsack, I can only remember what concerns the knapsack. The old man said he had some papers in it—the letter of a general—his money—his cross."

"Good—what next?"

"As it was difficult for me to keep the pelisse away from the hole, it slipped through my fingers. In trying to get hold of it again, I put my hand too much forward. One of the lasses saw it, and screamed out, pointing to the window."

"Dolt!" exclaimed the Prophet, becoming pale with rage, "you have ruined all."

"Stop a bit! there is nothing broken yet. When I heard the scream, I jumped down from my stool, and got back into the cellar; as the dog was no longer about, I left the door ajar, so that I could hear them open the window, and see, by the light, that the old man was looking out with the lamp; but he could find no ladder, and the window was too high for any man of common size to reach it!"

"He will have thought, like the first time, that it was the wind. You are less awkward than I imagined."

"The wolf has become a fox, as you said. Knowing where the knapsack was to be found with the money and the papers, and not being able to do more for the moment, I came away—and here I am."

"Go upstairs and fetch me the longest pike."

"Yes, master."

"And the red blanket."

"Yes, master."

"Go!"

Goliath began to mount the ladder; half-way up he stopped. "Master," said he, "may I not bring down a bit of meat for Death?—you will see that she'll bear me malice; she puts it all down to my account; she never forgets, and on the first occasion——"

"The pike and the cloth!" repeated the Prophet, in an imperious tone. And whilst Goliath, swearing to himself, proceeded to execute his instructions, Morok opened the great door of the shed, looked out into the yard, and listened.

"Here's the pike and the cloth," said the giant, as he descended the ladder with the articles. "Now what must I do next?"

"Return to the cellar, mount once more by the window, and when the old man leaves the room——"

"Who will make him leave the room?"

"Never mind! he will leave it."

"What next?"

"You say the lamp is near the window?"

"Quite near—on the table next to the knapsack."

"Well, then, as soon as the old man leaves the room, push open the window, throw down the lamp, and if you accomplish cleverly what remains to do—the ten florins are yours—you remember it all?"

"Yes, yes."

"The girls will be so frightened by the noise and darkness, that they will remain dumb with terror."

"Make yourself easy! The wolf turned into a fox; why not a serpent?"

"There is yet something."

"Well, what now?"

"The roof of this shed is not very high, the window of the loft is easy of access, the night is dark—instead of returning by the door——"

"I will come in at the window."

"Ay, and without noise."

"Like a regular snake!" and the giant departed.

"Yes!" said the Prophet to himself, after a long silence, "these means are sure. It was not for me to hesitate. A blind and obscure instrument, I know not the motives of the orders I have received: but from the recommendations which accompany them—but from the position of him who sends them—immense interests must be involved—interests connected with all that is highest and greatest upon earth!—And yet how can these two girls, almost beggars, how can this wretched soldier represent such interests?—No matter," added he, with humility; "I am the arm which acts—it is for the head, which thinks and orders, to answer for its work."

Soon after the Prophet left the shed, carrying with him the red cloth, and directed his steps towards the little stable that contained Jovial. The crazy door, imperfectly secured by a latch, was easily opened. At sight of a stranger Spoilsport threw himself upon him; but his teeth encountered the iron leggings of the Prophet, who, in spite of the efforts of the dog, took Jovial by his halter, threw the blanket over his head to prevent his either seeing or smelling, and led him from the stable into the interior of the menagerie, of which he closed the door.

CHAPTER X.

THE SURPRISE.

The orphans, after reading the journal of their father, remained for some moments silent, sad, and pensive, contemplating the leaves yellowed by time. Dagobert, also plunged in a reverie, thought of his wife and son, from whom he had been so long separated, and hoped soon to see again.

The soldier was the first to break the silence, which had lasted for several minutes. Taking the leaves from the hand of Blanche, he folded them carefully, put them into his pocket, and thus addressed the orphans:

"Courage, my children! you see what a brave father you have. Think only of the pleasure of greeting him, and remember always the name of the gallant youth, to whom you will owe that pleasure—for without him your father would have been killed in India."

"Djalma! we shall never forget him," said Rose.

"And if our guardian angel Gabriel should return," added Blanche, "we will ask him to watch over Djalma as over ourselves."

"Very well, my children; I am sure that you will forget nothing that concerns good feeling. But to return to the traveller, who came to visit your poor mother in Siberia, he had seen the general a month after the events of which you have read, and at a moment when he was about to enter on a new campaign against the English. It was then that your father entrusted him with the papers and medal."

"But of what use will this medal be to us, Dagobert?"

"And what is the meaning of these words engraved upon it?" added Rose, as she drew it from her bosom.

"Why it means, my children, that on the 13th of February, 1832, we must be at No. 3, Rue Saint François, Paris."

"But what are we to do there?"

"Your poor mother was seized so quickly with her last illness, that she was unable to tell me. All I know is, that this medal came to her from her parents, and that it had been a relic preserved in her family for more than a century."

"And how did our father get it?"

"Among the articles which had been hastily thrown into the coach, when he was removed by force from Warsaw, was a

dressing-case of your mother's, in which was contained this medal. Since that time the general had been unable to send it back, having no means of communicating with us, and not even knowing where we were."

"This medal is, then, of great importance to us?"

"Unquestionably; for never, during fifteen years, had I seen your mother so happy, as on the day the traveller brought it back to her. "Now," said she to me, in the presence of the stranger, and with tears of joy in her eyes, "now may my children's future be brilliant as their life has hitherto been miserable. I will entreat of the governor of Siberia permission to go to France with my daughters; it will perhaps be thought I have been sufficiently punished, by fifteen years of exile, and the confiscation of my property. Should they refuse, I will remain here; but they will at least allow me to send my children to France, and you must accompany them, Dagobert. You shall set out immediately, for much time has been already lost; and, if you were not to arrive before the 13th of next February, this cruel separation and toilsome journey would have been all in vain."

"Suppose we were one day after?"

"Your mother told me that if we arrived the 14th instead of the 13th, it would be too late. She also gave me a thick letter, to put into the post for France, in the first town we should pass through—which I have done."

"And do you think we shall be at Paris in time?"

"I hope so; still, if you are strong enough, we must sometimes make forced marches—for, if we only travel our five leagues a day, and that without accident, we shall scarcely reach Paris until the beginning of February, and it is better to be a little beforehand."

"But as father is in India, and condemned to death if he return to France, when shall we see him?"

"And where shall we see him?"

"Poor children! there are so many things you have yet to learn. When the traveller quitted him, the general could not return to France, but now he can do so."

"And why is that?"

"Because the Bourbons, who had banished him, were themselves turned out last year. The news must reach India, and your father will certainly come to meet you at Paris, because he expects that you and your mother will be there on the 13th of next February."

"Ah! now I understand how we may hope to see him," said Rose with a sigh.

"Do you know the name of this traveller, Dagobert?"

"No, my children; but whether called Jack or John, he is a good sort. When he left your mother, she thanked him with tears for all his kindness and devotion to the general, herself, and the children; but he pressed her hands in his, and said to her, in so gentle a voice that I could not help being touched by it: "Why do you thank me? Did He not say—LOVE YE ONE ANOTHER!"

"Who is that, Dagobert?"

"Yes, of whom did the traveller speak?"

"I know nothing about it; only the manner in which he pronounced those words struck me, and they were the last he spoke."

"Love one another!" repeated Rose, thoughtfully.

"How beautiful are those words!" added Blanche.

"And whither was the traveller going?"

"Far, very far into the North, as he told your mother. When she saw him depart, she said to me: 'His mild, sad talk has affected me even to tears; whilst I listened to him, I seemed to be growing better—I seemed to love my husband and my children more—and yet, to judge by the expression of his countenance, one would think that this stranger had never either smiled or wept!' She and I watched him from the door as long as we could follow him with our eyes; he carried his head down, and his walk was slow, calm, and firm; one might fancy that he counted his steps. And, talking of steps, I remarked yet another thing."

"What was it, Dagobert?"

"You know that the road which led to our house was always damp, because of the overflowing of the little spring."

"Yes."

"Well, then, the mark of the traveller's footsteps remained in the clay, and I saw that he had nails under his shoe in the form of a cross."

"How in the form of a cross?"

"Look!" said Dagobert, placing the tip of his finger seven times on the coverlet of the bed; "they were arranged thus beneath his heel:

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You see it forms a cross."

"What could it mean, Dagobert?"

"Chance, perhaps—yes, chance—and yet, in spite of myself, this confounded cross left behind him struck me as a bad omen, for hardly was he gone when misfortune after misfortune fell upon us."

"Alas! the death of our mother!"

"Yes—but, before that, another piece of ill-luck. You had not yet returned, and she was writing her petition to ask leave to go to France or to send you there, when I heard the gallop of a horse. It was a courier from the governor-general of Siberia. He brought us orders to change our residence; within three days we were to join other condemned persons, and be removed with them four hundred leagues further north. Thus, after fifteen years of exile, they redoubled in cruelty towards your mother."

"Why did they thus torment her?"

"One would think that some evil genius was at work against her. A few days later, the traveller would no longer have found us at Milosk; and if he had joined us further on, it would have been too far for the medal and papers to be of use—since, having set out almost immediately, we shall hardly arrive in time at Paris. 'If they had some interest to prevent me and my children from going to France,' said your mother, 'they would act just as they have done. To banish us four hundred leagues further, is to render impossible this journey, of which the term is fixed.' And the idea overwhelmed her with grief."

"Perhaps it was this unexpected sorrow that was the cause of her sudden illness."

"Alas! no, my children; it was that infernal cholera, who arrives without giving you notice—for he too is a great traveller—and strikes you down like a thunderbolt. Three hours after the traveller had left us, when you returned quite pleased and gay from the forest, with your large bunches of wild-flowers for your mother, she was already in the last agony, and hardly to be recognized. The cholera had broken out in the village, and that evening five persons died of it. Your mother had only time to hang the medal about your neck, my dear little Rose, to recommend you both to my care, and to beg that we should set out immediately. When she was gone, the new order of exile could not apply to you; and I obtained permission from the governor to take my departure with you for France, according to the last wishes——"

The soldier could not finish the sentence; he covered his

eyes with his hand, whilst the orphans embraced him sobbing.

"Oh! but," resumed Dagobert, with pride, after a moment of painful silence, "it was then that you showed yourselves the brave daughters of the general. Notwithstanding the danger, it was impossible to tear you from your mother's bedside; you remained with her to the last, you closed her eyes, you watched there all night, and you would not leave the village till you had seen me plant the little wooden cross over the grave I had dug for her."

Dagobert paused abruptly. A strange, wild neighing, mingled with ferocious roarings, made the soldier start from his seat. He grew pale, and cried: "It is Jovial! my horse! What are they doing to my horse? With that, opening the door he rushed down the stairs precipitately.

The two sisters clung together, so terrified at the sudden departure of the soldier, that they saw not an enormous hand pass through the broken panes, unfasten the catch of the window, push it violently open, and throw down the lamp placed on the little table, on which was the soldier's knapsack. The orphans thus found themselves plunged into complete darkness.

CHAPTER XI.

JOVIAL AND DEATH.

Morok had led Jovial into the middle of the menagerie, and then removed the cloth which prevented him from seeing and smelling. Scarcely had the tiger, lion, and panther caught a glimpse of him than they threw themselves, half-famished, against the bars of their dens.

The horse struck with stupor, his neck stretched out, his eye fixed, and trembling through all his limbs, appeared as if nailed to the ground; an abundant icy sweat rolled suddenly down his flanks. The lion and the tiger uttered fearful roarings, and struggled violently in their dens. The panther did not roar, but her mute rage was terrific.

With a tremendous bound, at the risk of breaking her skull, she sprang from the back of the cage against the bars: then, still mute, still furious, she crawled back to the extreme corner of the den, and with a new spring, as impetuous as it was blind, she again strove to force out the

iron grating. Three times had she thus bounded—silent, appalling—when the horse, passing from the immobility of stupor to the wild agony of fear, neighed long and loud, and rushed in desperation at the door by which he had entered. Finding it closed he hung his head, bent his knees a little, and rubbed his nostrils against the opening left between the ground and the bottom of the door, as if he wished to inhale the air from the outside; then, more and more affrighted, he began to neigh with redoubled force, and struck out violently with his fore-feet.

At the moment when Death was about once more to make her spring, the Prophet approached her cage. The heavy bolt which secured the grating was pushed from its staple by the pike of the brute-tamer, and, in another second, Morok was half way up the ladder that communicated with the loft.

The roaring of the lion and tiger, mingled with the neighing of Jovial, now resounded through all parts of the inn. The panther had again thrown herself furiously on the grating, and this time yielding with one spring, she was in the middle of the shed.

The light of the lantern was reflected from the glossy ebon of her hide, spotted with stains of a duller black. For an instant she remained motionless, crouching upon her thick-set limbs, with her head close to the floor, as if calculating the distance of the leap by which she was to reach the horse; then suddenly she darted upon him.

On seeing her break from her cage Jovial had thrown himself violently against the door, which was made to open inwards, and leaned against it with all his might, as though he would force it down. Then, at the moment when Death took her leap, he reared up in almost an erect position; but she, rapid as lightning, had fastened upon his throat and hung there, whilst at the same time she buried the sharp claws of her fore-feet in his chest. The jugular vein of the horse opened; a torrent of bright red blood spouted forth beneath the tooth of the panther, who, now supporting herself on her hind legs, squeezed her victim up against the door, whilst she dug into his flank with her claws, and laid bare the palpitating flesh. Then his half-strangled neighing became awful.

Suddenly these words resounded: "Courage, Jovial!—I am at hand! Courage!"

It was the voice of Dagobert, who was exhausting himself in desperate exertions to force open the door that concealed

this sanguinary struggle. "Jovial!" cried the soldier, "I am here. Help! help!"

At the sound of that friendly and well-known voice, the poor animal, almost at its last gasp, strove to turn its head in the direction whence came the accents of his master, answered him with a plaintive neigh, and, sinking beneath the efforts of the panther, fell prostrate, first on its knees, then upon its flank, so that its backbone lay right across the door, and still prevented its being opened. And now all was finished. The panther, squatting down upon the horse, crushed him with all her paws, and, in spite of some last faint kicks, buried her bloody snout in his body.

"Help! help! my horse!" cried Dagobert, as he vainly shook the door. "And no arms!" he added with rage; "no arms!"

"Take care!" exclaimed the brute-tamer, who appeared at the window of the loft; "do not attempt to enter—it might cost you your life. My panther is furious."

"But my horse! my horse!" cried Dagobert, in a voice of agony.

"He must have strayed from his stable during the night. and pushed open the door of the shed. At sight of him the panther must have broken out of her cage and seized him. You are answerable for all the mischief that may ensue," added the brute-tamer, with a menacing air; "for I shall have to run the greatest danger, to make Death return to her den."

"But my horse! only save my horse!" cried Dagobert, in a tone of hopeless supplication.

The Prophet disappeared from the window.

The roaring of the animals and the shouts of Dagobert, had roused from sleep every one in the White Falcon. Here and there lights were seen moving and windows were thrown open hurriedly. The servants of the inn soon appeared in the yard with lanterns, and surrounding Dagobert, inquired of him what had happened.

"My horse is there," cried the soldier, continuing to shake the door, "and one of that scoundrel's animals has escaped from its cage."

At these words the people of the inn, already terrified by the frightful roaring, fled from the spot and ran to inform the host. The soldier's anguish may be conceived, as pale, breathless, with his ear close to the chink of the door, he stood listening. By degrees the roaring had ceased, and nothing was heard but low growls, accompanied by the

stern voice of the Prophet, repeating in harsh, abrupt accents: "Death! come here! Death!"

The night was profoundly dark, and Dagobert did not perceive Goliath, who, crawling carefully along the tiled roof, entered the loft by the attic window.

And now the gate of the court-yard was again opened, and the landlord of the inn appeared, followed by a number of men. Armed with a carbine, he advanced with precaution; his people carried staves and pitchforks.

"What is the row here?" said he, as he approached Dagobert. "What a hubbub in my house! The devil take wild-beast showmen, and negligent fellows who don't know how to tie a horse to the manger! If your beast is hurt, so much the worse for you; you should have taken more care of it."

Instead of replying to these reproaches, the soldier, who still listened attentively to what was going on in the shed, made a sign to entreat silence. Suddenly a ferocious roar was heard, followed by a loud scream from the Prophet; and, almost immediately after, the panther howled piteously.

"You are no doubt the cause of some great accident," said the frightened host to the soldier; "did you not hear that cry? Morok is, perhaps, dangerously wounded."

Dagobert was about to answer, when the door opened, and Goliath appeared on the threshold.

"You may enter now," said he; "the danger is over."

The interior of the menagerie presented a singular spectacle. The Prophet, pale, and scarcely able to conceal his agitation beneath an apparent air of calmness, was kneeling some paces from the cage of the panther, in the attitude of one absorbed in himself; the motion of his lips indicating that he was praying. At sight of the host and the people of the inn, he rose, and said in a solemn voice: "I thank thee, my Preserver, that I have been able to conquer, by the strength which Thou hast given me."

"Then folding his arms, with haughty brow and imperious glance, he seemed to enjoy the triumph he had achieved over Death, who, stretched on the bottom of her den, continued to utter plaintive howlings. The spectators of this scene, ignorant that the pelisse of the brute-tamer covered a complete suit of armor, and attributing the cries of the panther solely to fear, were struck with astonishment and admiration at the intrepidity and almost supernatural power of this man. A few steps behind him stood Goliath, leaning

upon the ashen pikestaff. Finally, not far from the cage, in the midst of a pool of blood, lay the dead body of Jovial.

At sight of the blood-stained and torn remains, Dagobert stood motionless, and his rough countenance assumed an expression of the deepest grief: then, throwing himself on his knees, he lifted the head of Jovial; and when he saw those dull, glassy, and half-closed eyes, once so bright and intelligent, as they turned towards a much-loved master, the soldier could not suppress an exclamation of bitter anguish. Forgetting his anger, forgetting the deplorable consequences of this accident, so fatal to the interests of the two maidens, who would thus be prevented from continuing their journey —he thought only of the horrible death of his poor old horse, the ancient companion of his fatigues and wars, the faithful animal, twice wounded like himself, and from whom for so many years he had never been separated. This poignant emotion was so cruelly, so affectingly visible in the soldier's countenance, that the landlord and his people felt themselves for a moment touched with pity, as they gazed on the tall veteran kneeling beside his dead horse.

But, when following the course of his regrets, he thought how Jovial had also been the companion of his exile, how the mother of the orphans had formerly (like her daughters) undertaken a toilsome journey with the aid of this unfortunate animal, the fatal consequences of his loss presented themselves on a sudden to his mind. Then, fury succeeding to grief, he rose, with anger flashing from his eyes, and threw himself on the Prophet; with one hand he seized him by the throat, and with the other administered five or six heavy blows, which fell harmlessly on the coat of mail.

"Rascal! you shall answer to me for my horse's death!" said the soldier, as he continued his correction. Morok, light and sinewy, could not struggle with advantage against Dagobert, who, aided by his tall stature, still displayed extraordinary vigor. It needed the intervention of Goliath and the landlord to rescue the Prophet from the hands of the old grenadier. After some moments, they succeeded in separating the two champions. Morok was white with rage. It needed new efforts to prevent his seizing the pike to attack Dagobert.

"It is abominable!" cried the host, addressing the soldier, who pressed his clinched fists in despair against his bald forehead. "You expose this good man to be devoured by his beasts, and then you wish to beat him into the bargain,

Is this fitting conduct for a graybeard? Shall we have to fetch the police? You showed yourself more reasonable in the early part of the evening."

These words recalled the soldier to himself. He regretted his impetuosity the more, as the fact of his being a stranger might augment the difficulty of his position. It was necessary above all to obtain the price of his horse, so as to be enabled to continue his journey, the success of which might be compromised by a single day's delay. With a violent effort, therefore, he succeeded in restraining his wrath.

"You are right—I was too hasty," said he to the host, in an agitated voice, which he tried to make as calm as possible. "I had not the same patience as before. But ought not this man to be responsible for the loss of my horse? I make you judge in the matter."

"Well, then, as judge, I am not of your opinion. All this has been your own fault. You tied up your horse badly, and he strayed by chance into this shed, of which no doubt the door was half-open," said the host, evidently taking the part of the brute-tamer.

"It was just as you say," answered Goliath. "I can remember it. I left the door ajar, that the beasts might have some air in the night. The cages were well shut, and there was no danger."

"Very true," said one of the standers-by.

"It was only the sight of the horse," added another, "that made the panther furious, so as to break out of its cage."

"It is the Prophet who has the most right to complain," observed a third.

"No matter what this or that person says," returned Dagobert, whose patience was beginning to fail him, "I say, that I must have either money or a horse on the instant—yes, on the instant—for I wish to quit this unlucky house."

"And I say, it is you that must indemnify me," cried Morok, who had kept this stage-trick for the last, and who now exhibited his left hand all bloody, having hitherto concealed it beneath the sleeve of his pelisse. "I shall perhaps be disabled for life," he added; "see what a wound the panther has made here!"

Without having the serious character that the Prophet ascribed to it, the wound was a pretty deep one. This last argument gained for him the general sympathy. Reckoning no doubt upon this incident, to secure the winning of a cause that he now regarded as his own, the host said to the hostler: "There is only one way to make a finish. It is to call

up the burgomaster, and beg him to step here. He will decide who is right or wrong."

"I was just going to propose it to you," said the soldier "for, after all, I cannot take the law into my own hands."

"Fritz, run to the burgomaster's!"—and the hostler started in all haste. His master, fearing to be compromised by the examination of the soldier, whose papers he had neglected to ask for on his arrival, said to him: "The burgomaster will be in a very bad humor, to be disturbed so late. *I* have no wish to suffer by it, and I must therefore beg you to go and fetch me your papers, to see if they are in rule. I ought to have made you show them, when you arrived here in the evening."

"They are upstairs in my knapsack; you shall have them," answered the soldier—and turning away his head, and putting his hand before his eyes, as he passed the dead body of Jovial, he went out to rejoin the sisters.

The Prophet followed him with a glance of triumph, and said to himself: "There he goes!—without horse, without money, without papers. I could not do more—for I was forbidden to do more—I was to act with as much cunning as possible, and preserve appearances. Now every one will think this soldier in the wrong. I can at least answer for it, that he will not continue his journey for some days—since such great interests appear to depend on his arrest, and that of the young girls."

A quarter of an hour after this reflection of the brute-tamer, Karl, Goliath's comrade, left the hiding-place where his master had concealed him during the evening, and set out for Leipsic, with a letter which Morok had written in haste, and which Karl, on his arrival, was to put immediately into the post.

The address of this letter was as follows:

"A Monsieur Rodin, Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins, No. 11, A Paris, France."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BURGOMASTER.

Dagobert's anxiety increased every moment. Certain that his horse had not entered the shed of its own accord, he attributed the event which had taken place to the spite of the brute-tamer; but he sought in vain for the motive of

this wretch's animosity, and he reflected with dismay, that his cause, however just, would depend on the good or bad humor of a judge dragged from his slumbers, and who might be ready to condemn upon fallacious appearances.

Fully determined to conceal, as long as possible, from the orphans the fresh misfortunes which had befallen them, he was proceeding to open the door of their chamber, when he stumbled over Spoil-sport—for the dog had run back to his post, after vainly trying to prevent the Prophet from leading away Jovial. "Luckily the dog has returned; the poor little things have been well guarded," said the soldier, as he opened the door. To his great surprise, the room was in utter darkness.

"My children," cried he, "why are you without a light?" There was no answer. In terror he groped his way to the bed, and took the hand of one of the sisters; the hand was cold as ice.

"Rose, my children!" cried he. "Blanche! Give me some answer! you frighten me." Still the same silence continued; the hand which he held remained cold and powerless, and yielded passively to his touch.

Just then, the moon emerged from the black clouds that surrounded her, and threw sufficient light into the little room, and upon the bed, which faced the window, for the soldier to see that the two sisters had fainted. The bluish light of the moon added to the paleness of the orphans; they held each other in a half embrace, and Rose had buried her head on Blanche's bosom.

"They must have fainted through fear," exclaimed Dagobert, running to fetch his gourd. "Poor things! after a day of so much excitement, it is not surprising." And moistening the corner of a handkerchief with a few drops of brandy, the soldier knelt beside the bed, gently chafed the temples of the two sisters, and held the linen, wet with the spiritous liquor, to their little pink nostrils.

Still on his knees, and bending his dark, anxious face over the orphans, he waited some moments before again resorting to the only restorative in his power. A slight shiver of Rose gave him renewed hope; the young girl turned her head on the pillow with a sigh; then she started, and opened her eyes with an expression of astonishment and alarm; but, not immediately recognizing Dagobert, she exclaimed: "Oh, sister!" and threw herself into the arms of Blanche.

The latter also was beginning to experience the effect of the soldier's care. The exclamation of Rose completely

roused her from her lethargy, and she clung to her sister, again sharing the fright without knowing its cause.

"They've come to—that's the chief point," said Dagobert, "now we shall soon get rid of these foolish fears." Then softening his voice, he added: "Well, my children, courage! you are better. It is I who am here—me, Dagobert!"

The orphans made a hasty movement, and, turning towards the soldier their sweet faces, which were still full of dismay and agitation, they both, by a graceful impulse, extended their arms to him and cried: "It is you, Dagobert—then we are safe!"

"Yes, my children, it is I," said the veteran, taking their hands in his, and pressing them joyfully. "So you have been much frightened during my absence?"

"Oh, frightened to death!"

"If you knew—oh, goodness! if you knew——"

"But the lamp is extinguished—why is that?"

"We did not do it."

"Come—recover yourselves, poor children, and tell me all about it. I have no good opinion of this inn; but, luckily, we shall soon leave it. It was an ill wind that blew me hither—though, to be sure, there was no other in the village. But what has happened?"

"You were hardly gone, when the window flew open violently, and the lamp and table fell together with a loud crash."

"Then our courage failed—we screamed and clasped each other, for we thought we could hear some one moving in the room."

"And we were so frightened, that we fainted away."

Unfortunately, persuaded that it was the violence of the wind which had already broken the glass, and shaken the window, Dagobert attributed this second accident to the same cause as the first, thinking that he had not properly secured the fastening and that the orphans had been deceived by a false alarm. "Well, well—it is over now," said he to them: "Calm yourselves, and don't think of it any more."

"But why did you leave us so hastily, Dagobert?"

"Yes, now I remember—did we not hear a great noise, sister, and see Dagobert run to the staircase, crying: 'My horse! what are they doing to my horse?'"

"It was then Jovial who neighed?"

These questions renewed the anguish of the soldier; he feared to answer them, and said, with a confused air: "Yes

—Jovial neighed—but it was nothing. By the by, we must have a light here. Do you know where I put my flint and steel last evening? Well, I have lost my senses; it is here in my pocket. Luckily, too, we have a candle, which I am going to light; I want to look in my knapsack for some papers I require."

Dagobert struck a few sparks, obtained a light, and saw that the window was indeed open, the table thrown down, and the lamp lying by the side of the knapsack. He shut the window, set the little table on its feet again, placed the knapsack upon it, and began to unbuckle this last in order to take out his portfolio, which had been deposited along with his cross and purse, in a kind of pocket between the outside and the lining. The straps had been readjusted with so much care, that there was no appearance of the knapsack having been disturbed: but when the soldier plunged his hand into the pocket above-mentioned, he found it empty. Struck with consternation, he grew pale, and retreated a step, crying: "How is this?—Nothing!"

"What is the matter?" said Blanche. He made her no answer. Motionless, he leaned against the table, with his hand still buried in the pocket. Then, yielding to a vague hope—for so cruel a reality did not appear possible—he hastily emptied the contents of the knapsack on the table—his poor half-worn clothes—his old uniform-coat of the horse-grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, a sacred relic for the soldier—but, turn and return them as he would, he found neither his purse, nor the portfolio that contained his papers, the letters of General Simon, and his cross.

In vain, with that serious childishness which always accompanies a hopeless search, he took the knapsack by the two ends, and shook it vigorously; nothing came out. The orphans looked on with uneasiness, not understanding his silence or his movements, for his back was turned to them. Blanche ventured to say to him in a timid voice: "What ails you—you don't answer us—What is it you are looking for in your knapsack?"

Still mute, Dagobert searched his own person, turned out all his pockets—nothing!—For the first time in his life, perhaps, his two children, as he called them, had spoken to him without receiving a reply. Blanche and Rose felt the big tears start into their eyes; thinking that the soldier was angry, they durst not again address him.

"No, no! it is impossible—no!" said the veteran, pressing his hand to his forehead, and seeking in his memory

where he might have put those precious objects, the loss of which he could not yet bring himself to believe. A sudden beam of joy flashed from his eyes. He ran to a chair, and took from it the portmanteau of the orphans; it contained a little linen, two black dresses, and a small box of white wood, in which were a silk handkerchief that had belonged to their mother, two locks of her hair, and a black ribbon she had worn round her neck. The little she possessed had been seized by the Russian government, in pursuance of the confiscation. Dagobert searched and researched every article—peeped into all the corners of the portmanteau—still nothing!

This time, completely worn out, leaning against the table, the strong, energetic man felt himself giving way. His face was burning, yet bathed in a cold sweat; his knees trembled under him. It is a common saying, that drowning men will catch at straws; and so it is with the despair that still clings to some shred of hope. Catching at a last chance—absurd, insane, impossible—he turned abruptly towards the orphans, and said to them, without considering the alteration in his voice and features: "I did not give them to you—to keep for me?—speak?"

Instead of answering, Rose and Blanche, terrified at his paleness, and the expression of his countenance, uttered a cry. "Good heavens! what is the matter with you?" murmured Rose.

"Have you got them—yes or no?" cried in a voice of thunder the unfortunate, distracted man. "If you have not—I'll take the first knife I meet with, and stick it into my body!"

"Alas! you are so good: pardon us if we have done anything to afflict you! You love us so much, you would not do us any harm." The orphans began to weep, as they stretched forth their hands in supplication towards the soldier.

He looked at them with haggard eye, without even seeing them; till, as the delusion passed away, the reality presented itself to his mind with all its terrible consequences. Then he clasped his hands together, fell on his knees before the bed of the orphans, leaned his forehead upon it, and amid his convulsive sobs—for the man of iron sobbed like a child—these broken words were audible: "Forgive me—forgive!—I do not know how it can be!—Oh! what a misfortune!—what a misfortune!—Forgive me!"

At this outbreak of grief, the cause of which they under-

stood not, but which in such a man was heart-rending, the two sisters wound their arms about his old gray head, and exclaimed amid their tears: "Look at us! Only tell us what is the matter with you?—Is it our fault?"

At this instant, the noise of footsteps resounded from the stairs, mingled with the barking of Spoil-sport, who had remained outside the door. The nearer the steps approached, the more furious became the barking; it was no doubt accompanied with hostile demonstrations, for the host was heard to cry out in an angry tone: "Hollo! you there! Call off your dog, or speak to him. It is Mr. Burgomaster who is coming up."

"Dagobert—do you hear?—it is the burgomaster," said Rose.

"They are coming upstairs—a number of people," resumed Blanche.

The word *burgomaster* recalled whatever had happened to the mind of Dagobert, and completed, so to express it, the picture of his terrible position. His horse was dead, he had neither papers nor money, and a day, a single day's detention, might defeat the last hope of the sisters, and render useless this long and toilsome journey.

Men of strong minds, and the veteran was of the number, prefer great perils, positions of danger accurately defined, to the vague anxieties which precede a settled misfortune. Guided by his good sense and admirable devotion, Dagobert understood at once, that his only resource was now in the justice of the burgomaster, and that all his efforts should tend to conciliate the favor of that magistrate. He therefore dried his eyes with the sheet, rose from the ground, erect, calm, and resolute, and said to the orphans: "Fear nothing, my children; it is our deliverer who is at hand."

"Will you call off your dog or no?" cried the host, still detained on the stairs by Spoil-sport, who, as a vigilant sentinel, continued to dispute the passage. "Is the animal mad, I say? Why don't you tie him up? Have you not caused trouble enough in my house? I tell you, that Mr. Burgomaster is waiting to examine you in your turn, for he has finished with Morok."

Dagobert drew his fingers through his gray locks and across his moustache, clasped the collar of his top-coat, and brushed the sleeves with his hand, in order to give himself the best appearance possible; for he felt that the fate of the orphans must depend on his interview with the magistrate. It was not without a violent beating of the heart, that he

laid his hand upon the door-knob, saying to the young girls, who were growing more and more frightened by such a succession of events: "Hide yourselves in your bed, my children; if any one must needs enter, it shall be the burgomaster alone."

Thereupon, opening the door, the soldier stepped out on the landing-place, and said: "Down, Spoil-sport!—Here!"

The dog obeyed, but with manifest repugnance. His master had to speak twice, before he would abstain from all hostile movements towards the host. This latter, with a lantern in one hand and his cap in the other, respectfully preceded the burgomaster, whose magisterial proportions were lost in the half shadows of the staircase. Behind the judge, and a few steps lower, the inquisitive faces of the people belonging to the inn were dimly visible by the light of another lantern.

Dagobert, having turned the dog into the room, shut the door after him, and advanced two steps on the landing-place, which was sufficiently spacious to hold several persons, and had in one corner a wooden bench with a back to it. The burgomaster, as he ascended the last stair, was surprised to see Dagobert close the door of the chamber, as though he wished to forbid his entrance. "Why do you shut that door?" asked he in an abrupt tone.

"First, because two girls, whom I have the charge of, are in bed in that room; secondly, because your examination would alarm them," replied Dagobert. "Sit down upon this bench, Mr. Burgomaster, and examine me here; it will not make any difference, I should think."

"And by what right," asked the judge, with a displeased air, "do you pretend to dictate to me the place of your examination?"

"Oh, I have no such pretension, Mr. Burgomaster!" said the soldier hastily, fearing above all things to prejudice the judge against him: "only, as the girls are in bed, and already much frightened, it would be a proof of your good heart to examine me where I am."

"Humph!" said the magistrate, with ill-humor; "a pretty state of things, truly!—It was much worth while to disturb me in the middle of the night. But, come, so be it; I will examine you here." Then, turning to the landlord, he added: "Put your lantern upon this bench, and leave us."

The innkeeper obeyed, and went down, followed by his people, as dissatisfied as they were at being excluded from the examination. The veteran was left alone with the magistrate.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JUDGMENT.

The worthy burgomaster of Mockern wore a cloth cap, and was enveloped in a cloak. He sat down heavily on the bench. He was a corpulent man, about sixty, with an arrogant, morose countenance; and he frequently rubbed with his red, fat fist, eyes that were still swollen and blood-shot, from his having been suddenly roused from sleep.

Dagobert stood bareheaded before him, with a submissive, respectful air, holding his old foraging cap in his hands, and trying to read in the sullen physiognomy of his judge what chance there might be to interest him in his favor—that is, in favor of the orphans.

In this critical juncture, the poor soldier summoned to his aid all his presence of mind, reason, eloquence and resolution. He, who had twenty times braved death with the utmost coolness—who, calm and serene, because sincere and tried, had never quailed before the eagle-glance of the Emperor, his hero and idol—now felt himself disconcerted and trembling before the ill-humored face of a village burgomaster. Even so, a few hours before, he had submitted, impassive and resigned, to the insults of the Prophet—that he might not compromise the sacred mission with which a dying mother had entrusted him—thus showing to what a height of heroic abnegation it is possible for a simple and honest heart to attain.

"What have you to say in your justification? Come, be quick!" said the judge roughly, with a yawn of impatience.

"I have not got to justify myself—I have to make a complaint, Mr. Burgomaster," replied Dagobert in a firm voice.

"Do you think you are to teach me in what terms I am to put my questions?" exclaimed the magistrate, in so sharp a tone that the soldier reproached himself with having begun the interview so badly. Wishing to pacify his judge, he made haste to answer with submission:

"Pardon me, Mr. Burgomaster, I have ill-explained my meaning. I only wished to say that I was not wrong in this affair."

"The Prophet says the contrary."

"The *Prophet?*" repeated the soldier, with an air of doubt.

"The Prophet is a pious and honest man," resumed the judge, "incapable of falsehood."

"I cannot say anything upon that subject; but you are too just, and have too good a heart, Mr. Burgomaster, to condemn without hearing me. It is not a man like you that would do an injustice; oh, one can see that at a glance!"

In resigning himself thus to play the part of a courtier, Dagobert softened as much as possible his gruff voice, and strove to give to his austere countenance a smiling, agreeable, and flattering expression. "A man like you," he added, with redoubled suavity of manner, "a respectable judge like you, never shuts his ear to one side or the other."

"Ears are not in question, but eyes; and, though mine smart as if I had rubbed them with nettles, I have *seen* the hand of the brute-tamer, with a frightful wound on it."

"Yes, Mr. Burgomaster, it is very true; but consider, if he had shut his cages and his door, all this would not have happened."

"Not so; it is your fault. You should have fastened your horse securely to the manger."

"You are right, Mr. Burgomaster, certainly, you are right," said the soldier, in a still more affable and conciliating voice. "It is not for a poor devil like me to contradict you. But supposing my horse was let loose out of pure malice, in order that he might stray into the menagerie—you will then acknowledge that it was *not* my fault. That is, you will acknowledge it if you think fit," hastily added the soldier; "I have no right to dictate to you in anything."

"And why the devil should any one do you this ill-turn?"

"I do not know, Mr. Burgomaster—but——"

"You do not know—well, nor I either," said the burgomaster impatiently. "Zounds! what a many words about the carcass of an old horse!"

The countenance of the soldier, losing on a sudden its expression of forced suavity, became once more severe; he answered in a grave voice, full of emotion: "My horse is dead—he is no more than a carcass—that is true; but an hour ago, though very old, he was full of life and intelligence. He neighed joyously at my voice—and, every evening, he licked the hands of the two poor children, whom he had carried all the day—as formerly he had carried their mother. Now he will never carry any one again; they will

throw him to the dogs, and all will be finished. You need not have reminded me harshly of it, Mr. Burgomaster—for I loved my horse!"

By these words, pronounced with noble and touching simplicity, the burgomaster was moved in spite of himself, and regretted his hasty speech. "It is natural that you should be sorry for your horse," said he, in a less impatient tone; "but what is to be done?—It is a misfortune."

"A misfortune?—Yes, Mr. Burgomaster, a very great misfortune. The girls, who accompany me, were too weak to undertake a long journey on foot, too poor to travel in a carriage—and yet we have to arrive in Paris before the month of February. When their mother died, I promised her to take them to France, for these children have only me to take care of them."

"You are then their——"

"I am their faithful servant, Mr. Burgomaster; and now that my horse has been killed, what can I do for them? Come, you are good, you have perhaps children of your own: if, one day, they should find themselves in the position of my two little orphans—with no wealth, no resources in the world, but an old soldier who loves them, and an old horse to carry them along—if, after being very unfortunate from their birth—yes, very unfortunate, for my orphans are the daughters of exiles—they should see happiness before them at the end of a journey, and then, by the death of their horse, that journey become impossible—tell me, Mr. Burgomaster, if this would not touch your heart? Would you not find, as I do, that the loss of my horse is irreparable?"

"Certainly," answered the burgomaster, who was not ill-natured at bottom, and who could not help taking part in Dagobert's emotion; "I now understand the importance of the loss you have suffered. And then your orphans interest me: how old are they?"

"Fifteen years and two months. They are twins."

"Fifteen years and two months—that is about the age of my Frederica."

"You have a young lady of that age?" cried Dagobert, once more awaking to hope; "ah, Mr. Burgomaster! I am really no longer uneasy about my poor children. You will do us justice."

"To do justice is my duty. After all, in this affair, the faults are about equal on both sides. You tied up your horse badly, and the brute-tamer left his door open. He says: 'I am wounded in the hand.' You answer: 'My

horse has been killed—and, for a thousand reasons, the loss of my horse is irreparable.'"

"You make me speak better than I could ever speak on my own account, Mr. Burgomaster," said the soldier, with a humble, insinuating smile; "but 'tis what I meant to express—and, as you say yourself, Mr. Burgomaster, my horse being my whole fortune, it is only fair——"

"Exactly so," resumed the magistrate, interrupting the soldier; "your reasons are excellent. The Prophet—who is a good and pious man withal—has related the facts to me in his own way; and then, you see, he is an old acquaintance. We are nearly all zealous Catholics here, and he sells to our wives such cheap and edifying little books, with chaplets and amulets of the best manufacture, at less than the prime cost. All this, you will say, has nothing to do with the affair; and you will be right in saying so: still I must needs confess that I came here with the intention——"

"Of deciding against me, eh, Mr. Burgomaster?" said Dagobert, gaining more and more confidence. "You see, you were not quite awake, and your justice had only one eye open."

"Really, master soldier," answered the judge with good humor, "it is not unlikely; for I did not conceal from Morok that I gave it in his favor. Then he said to me (very generously, by the way): 'Since you condemn my adversary, I will not aggravate his position by telling you certain things——'"

"What! against me?"

"Apparently so; but, like a generous enemy, when I told him that I should most likely condemn you to pay him damages, he said no more about it. For I will not hide from you that, before I heard your reasons, I fully intended that you should make compensation for the Prophet's wound."

"See, Mr. Burgomaster, how the most just and able persons are subject to be deceived," said Dagobert, becoming once more the courtier; then, trying to assume a prodigiously knowing look, he added: "But such persons find out the truth at last, and are not to be made dupes of, whatever *prophets* may say."

This poor attempt at a jest—the first and only one, perhaps, that Dagobert had ever been guilty of—will show the extremity to which he was reduced, and the desperate efforts of all kinds he was making to conciliate the good graces of his judge. The burgomaster did not at first see the pleas-

antry; he was only led to perceive it by the self-satisfied mien of Dagobert, and by his inquiring glance, which seemed to say: "Is it not good, eh?—I am astonished at it myself."

The magistrate began, therefore, to smile with a patronizing air, and, nodding his head, replied in the same jocular spirit: "Ha! ha! ha! you are right; the Prophet is out in his prophesy. You shall not pay him any damages. The faults on both sides are equal, and the injuries balance one another. He has been wounded, your horse has been killed; so you may cry quits, and have done with it."

"But how much then, do you think he owes me?" asked the soldier, with singular simplicity.

"How much?"

"Yes, Mr. Burgomaster, what sum will he have to pay me? Yes—but, before you decide, I must tell you one thing, Mr. Burgomaster. I think I shall be entitled to spend only part of the money in buying a horse. I am sure, that, in the environs of Leipsic, I could get a beast very cheap from some of the peasants; and, between ourselves, I will own to you, that, if I could meet with only a nice little donkey—I should not be over particular—I should even like it just as well; for, after my poor Jovial, the company of another horse would be painful to me. I must also tell you——"

"Hey-day!" cried the burgomaster, interrupting Dagobert, "of what money, what donkey, and what other horse are you talking? I tell you, that you owe nothing to the Prophet, and that he owes you nothing!"

"He owes me nothing?"

"You are very dull of comprehension, my good man. I repeat, that, if the Prophet's animals have killed your horse, the Prophet himself has been badly wounded; so you may cry quits. In other words, you owe him nothing, and he owes you nothing. Now do you understand?"

Dagobert, confounded, remained for some moments without answering, whilst he looked at the burgomaster with an expression of deep anguish. He saw that his judgment would again destroy all his hopes.

"But, Mr. Burgomaster," resumed he, in an agitated voice, "you are too just not to pay attention to one thing: the wound of the brute-tamer does not prevent him from continuing his trade; the death of my horse prevents me from continuing my journey; therefore, he ought to indemnify me."

The judge considered he had already done a good deal for

Dagobert, in not making him responsible for the wound of the Prophet, who, as we have already said, exercised a certain influence over the Catholics of the country by the sale of his devotional treasures, and also from its being known that he was supported by some persons of eminence. The soldier's pertinacity, therefore, offended the magistrate, who, reassuming his lofty air, replied, in a chilling tone: "You will make me repent my impartiality. How is this? instead of thanking me, you ask for more."

"But, Mr. Burgomaster, I ask only for what is just. I wish I were wounded in the hand, like the Prophet, so that I could but continue my journey."

"We are not talking of what you wish. I have pronounced sentence—there is no more to say."

"But, Mr. Burgomaster——"

"Enough, enough. Let us go to the next subject. Your papers?"

"Yes, we will speak about my papers; but I beg of you, Mr. Burgomaster, to have pity on those two children. Let us have the means to continue our journey, and——"

"I have done all I could for you—perhaps, more than I ought. Once again, your papers!"

"I must first explain to you——"

"No explanation—your papers!—Or would you like me to have you arrested as a vagabond?"

"Me—arrested!"

"I tell you that, if you refuse to show me your papers, it will be as if you had none. Now, those people who have no papers we take into custody till the authorities can dispose of them. Let me see your papers, and make haste!—I am in a hurry to get home."

Dagobert's position was the more distressing, as for a moment he had indulged in sanguine hope. The last blow was now added to all the veteran had suffered since the commencement of this scene, which was a cruel as well as dangerous trial, for a man of his character—upright, but obstinate—faithful, but rough and absolute—a man who, for a long time a soldier, and a victorious one, had acquired a certain despotic manner of treating with civilians.

At these words—"your papers," Dagobert became very pale; but he tried to conceal his anguish beneath an air of assurance, which he thought best calculated to gain the magistrate's good opinion. "I will tell you all about it, Mr. Burgomaster," said he. "Nothing can be clearer. Such a thing might happen to any one. I do not look like a beggar

and a vagabond, do I? And yet—you will understand, that an honest man who travels with two young girls——"

"No more words! Your papers!"

At this juncture two powerful auxiliaries arrived to the soldier's aid. The orphans, growing more and more uneasy, and hearing Dagobert still talking upon the landing-place, had risen and dressed themselves; so that just at the instant, when the magistrate said in a rough voice—"No more words! Your papers!"—Rose and Blanche, holding each other by the hand, came forth from the chamber.

At sight of those charming faces, which their poor mourning vestments only rendered more interesting, the burgomaster rose from his seat, struck with surprise and admiration. By a spontaneous movement, each sister took a hand of Dagobert, and pressed close to him, whilst they regarded the magistrate with looks of mingled anxiety and candor.

It was so touching a picture, this of the old soldier presenting as it were to his judge the graceful children, with countenances full of innocence and beauty, that the burgomaster, by a sudden reaction, found himself once more disposed to sentiments of pity. Dagobert perceived it; and, still holding the orphans by the hand, he advanced towards him, and said in a feeling voice: "Look at these poor children, Mr. Burgomaster! Could I show you a better passport?" And, overcome by so many painful sensations—restrained, yet following each other in quick succession—Dagobert felt, in spite of himself, that the tears were starting to his eyes.

Though naturally rough, and rendered still more testy by the interruption of his sleep, the burgomaster was not quite deficient in sense of feeling. He perceived at once, that a man thus accompanied, ought not to inspire any great distrust. "Poor dear children!" said he, as he examined them with growing interest; "orphans so young, and they come from far——"

"From the heart of Siberia, Mr. Burgomaster, where their mother was an exile before their birth. It is now more than five months that we have been travelling on by short stages—hard enough, you will say, for children of their age. It is for them that I ask your favor and support—for them against whom everything seems to combine to-day—for, only just now, when I went to look for my papers, I could not find in my knapsack the portfolio in which they were, along with my purse and cross—for you must know, Mr. Burgomaster—pardon me, if I say it—'tis not from vain glory—

but I was decorated by the hand of the Emperor; and a man whom he decorated with his own hand, you see, could not be so bad a fellow, though he may have had the misfortune to lose his papers—and his purse. That's what has happened to me, and made me so pressing about the damages."

"How and where did you suffer this loss?"

"I do not know, Mr. Burgomaster; I am sure that the evening before last, at bed-time, I took a little money out of the purse, and saw the portfolio in its place; yesterday I had small change sufficient, and did not undo the knapsack."

"And where then has the knapsack been kept?"

"In the room occupied by the children: but this night——"

Dagobert was here interrupted by the tread of some one mounting the stairs: it was the Prophet. Concealed in the shadow of the staircase, he had listened to this conversation, and he dreaded lest the weakness of the burgomaster should mar the complete success of his projects.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DECISION.

Morok, who wore his left arm in a sling, having slowly ascended the staircase, saluted the burgomaster respectfully. At sight of the repulsive countenance of the lion-tamer, Rose and Blanche, affrighted, drew back a step nearer to the soldier. The brow of the latter grew dark, for he felt his blood boil against Morok, the cause of all his difficulties—though he was yet ignorant that Goliath, at the instigation of the Prophet, had stolen his portfolio and papers.

"What did you want, Morok?" said the burgomaster, with an air half friendly and half displeased. "I told the landlord that I did not wish to be interrupted."

"I have come to render you a service, Mr. Burgomaster."

"A service?"

"Yes, a great service; or I should not have ventured to disturb you. My conscience reproaches me."

"Your conscience?"

"Yes, Mr. Burgomaster, it reproaches me for not having told you all that I had to tell about this man; a false pity led me astray."

"Well, but what have you to tell?"

Morok approached the judge, and spoke to him for some

time in a low voice. At first apparently much astonished, the burgomaster became by degrees deeply attentive and anxious; every now and then he allowed some exclamation of surprise or doubt to escape him, whilst he glanced covertly at the group formed by Dagobert and the two young girls. By the expression of his countenance, which grew every moment more unquiet, severe, and searching, it was easy to perceive that the interest which the magistrate had felt for the orphans and for the soldier, was gradually changed, by the secret communications of the Prophet, into a sentiment of distrust and hostility.

Dagobert saw this sudden revolution, and his fears, which had been appeased for an instant, returned with redoubled force; Rose and Blanche, confused, and not understanding the object of this mute scene, looked at the soldier with increased perplexity.

"The devil!" said the burgomaster, rising abruptly; "all this never occurred to me. What could I have been thinking of?—But you see, Morok, when one is roused up in the middle of the night, one has not always presence of mind. You said well: it is a great service you came to render me."

"I assert nothing positively, but——"

"No matter; 'tis a thousand to one that you are right."

"It is only a suspicion founded upon divers circumstances; but even a suspicion——"

"May give you scent of the truth. And here was I, going like a gull into the snare!—Once more, what could I have been thinking of?"

"It is so difficult to be on guard against certain appearances."

"You need not tell me so, my dear Morok, you need not tell me so."

During this mysterious conversation, Dagobert was on thorns; he saw vaguely that a violent storm was about to burst. He thought only of how he should still keep his anger within bounds.

Morok again approached the judge, and glancing at the orphans, recommenced speaking in a low voice. "Oh!" cried the burgomaster, with indignation, "you go too far now."

"I affirm nothing," said Morok, hastily; "it is a mere supposition founded on——" and he again brought his lips close to the ear of the judge.

"After all, why not?" resumed the magistrate, lifting up his hands; "such people are capable of anything. He says

that he brings them from the heart of Siberia: why may not all this prove to be a tissue of impudent falsehoods?—But I am not to be made a dupe twice," cried the burgomaster, in an angry tone, for, like all persons of a weak and shifting character, he was without pity for those whom he thought capable of having beguiled his compassion.

"Do not be in a hurry to decide—don't give to my words more weight than they deserve," resumed Morok with a hypocritical affectation of humility. "I am unhappily placed in so false a position with regard to this man"—pointing to Dagobert—"that I might be thought to have acted from private resentment for the injury he has done me; perhaps I may so act without knowing it, while I fancy that I am only influenced by love of justice, horror of falsehood, and respect for our holy religion. Well—who lives long enough will know—and may heaven forgive me if I am deceived!—In any case, the law will pronounce upon it; and if they should prove innocent, they will be released in a month or two."

"And, for that reason, I need not hesitate. It is a mere measure of precaution; they will not die of it. Besides, the more I think of it, the more it seems probable. Yes, this man is doubtless a French spy or agitator, especially when I compare these suspicions with the late demonstration of the students at Frankfort."

"And, upon that theory, nothing is better fitted to excite and stir up those hot-headed youths than——" He glanced significantly at the two sisters; then, after a pause, he added with a sigh, "Satan does not care by what means he works out his ends!"

"Certainly, it would be odious, but well-devised."

"And then, Mr. Burgomaster, look at him attentively: you will see that this man has a dangerous face. You will see——"

In continuing thus to speak in a low tone, Morok had evidently pointed to Dagobert. The latter, notwithstanding his self-command, felt that the restraint he had imposed upon himself, since his arrival at this unlucky inn, and above all since the commencement of the conversation between Morok and the burgomaster, was becoming no longer bearable; besides, he saw clearly that all his efforts to conciliate the favor of the judge were rendered completely null by the fatal influence of the brute-tamer; so, losing patience, he advanced towards him with his arms folded on his breast, and said to him in a subdued voice: "Was it of me that you were whispering to Mr. Burgomaster?"

"Yes," said Morok, looking fixedly at him.

"Why did you not speak out loud?" Having said this, the almost convulsive movement of his thick moustache, as he stood looking Morok full in the face, gave evidence of a severe internal conflict. Seeing that his adversary preserved a contemptuous silence, he repeated in a sterner voice: "I ask you, why you did not speak out loud to Mr. Burgomaster, when you were talking of me?"

"Because there are some things so shameful, that one would blush to utter them aloud," answerd Morok insolently.

Till then Dagobert had kept his arms folded; he now extended them violently, clenching his fists. This sudden movement was so expressive that the two sisters uttered a cry of terror, and drew closer to him.

"Hark ye, Mr. Burgomaster!" said the soldier, grinding his teeth with rage; "bid that man go down, or I will not answer for myself!"

"What!" said the burgomaster, haughtily; "do you dare to give orders to me?"

"I tell you to make that man go down," resumed Dagobert, quite beside himself, "or there will be mischief!"

"Dagobert!—good heaven!—be calm," cried the children, grasping his hands.

"It becomes you, certainly—miserable vagabond that you are—not to say worse," returned the burgomaster, in a rage: "it becomes you to give orders to me!—Oh! you think to impose upon me, by telling me you have lost your papers!—It will not serve your turn, for which you carry about with you these two girls, who, in spite of their innocent looks, are perhaps after all——"

"Wretch!" cried Dagobert, with so terrible a voice and gesture that the official did not dare to finish. Taking the children by the arm before they could speak a word, the soldier pushed them back into the chamber; then, locking the door, and putting the key into his pocket, he returned precipitately towards the burgomaster, who, frightened at the menacing air and attitude of the veteran, retreated a couple of steps, and held by one hand to the rail of the staircase.

"Listen to me!" said the soldier, seizing the judge by the arm. "Just now, that scoundrel insulted me—I bore with it—for it only concerned myself. I have heard patiently all your idle talk, because you seemed for a moment to interest yourself in those poor children. But since you have neither soul, nor pity, nor justice—I tell you that, burgomaster though

you are—I will spurn you as I would spurn that dog," pointing again to the Prophet, "if you have the misfortune to mention those two young girls, in any other way than you would speak of your own child!—Now, do you mark me?"

"What!—you dare to say," cried the burgomaster, stammering with rage, "that if I happen to mention two adventuresses——"

"Hats off!—when you speak of the daughters of the Duke of Ligny," cried the soldier, snatching the cap of the burgomaster and flinging it on the ground. On this act of aggression, Morok could not restrain his joy. Exasperated and losing all hope, Dagobert had at length yielded to the violence of his anger, after struggling so painfully against it for some hours.

When the burgomaster saw his cap at his feet, he looked at the brute-tamer with an air of stupefaction, as if he hesitated to believe so great an enormity. Dagobert, regretting his violence, and feeling that no means of conciliation now remained, threw a rapid glance around him, and, retreating several paces, gained the topmost steps of the staircase. The burgomaster stood near the bench, in a corner of the landing-place, whilst Morok, with his arm in the sling, to give the more serious appearance to his wound, was close beside him. "So!" cried the magistrate, deceived by the backward movement of Dagobert, "you think to escape, after daring to lift hand against me!—Old villain!"

"Forgive me, Mr. Burgomaster! It was a burst of rashness that I was not able to control. I am sorry for it," said Dagobert in a repentant voice, and hanging his head humbly.

"No pity for thee, rascal! You would begin again to smooth me over with your coaxing ways, but I have penetrated your secret designs. You are not what you appear to be, and there is perhaps an affair of state at the bottom of all this," added the magistrate, in a very diplomatic tone. "All means are alike to those who wish to set Europe in flames."

"I am only a poor devil, Mr. Burgomaster; you, that have a good heart, will show me some mercy."

"What! when you have pulled off my cap?"

"And you," added the soldier, turning towards Morok, "you, that have been the cause of all this—have some pity upon me—do not bear malice!—You, a holy man, speak a word in my favor to Mr. Burgomaster."

"I have spoken to him what I was bound to speak," answered the Prophet ironically.

"Oho! you can look foolish enough now, you old vagabond! Did you think to impose on me with lamentations?" resumed the burgomaster, advancing towards Dagobert. "Thanks be, I am no longer your dupe!—You shall see that we have good dungeons at Leipsic for French agitators and female vagrants, for your damsels are no better than you are. Come," added he, puffing out his cheeks with an important air, "go down before me—and as for you, Morok——"

The burgomaster was unable to finish. For some minutes Dagobert had only sought to gain time, and had cast many a side-glance at a half-open door on the landing-place, just opposite to the chamber occupied by the orphans: finding the moment favorable, he now rushed quick as lightning on the burgomaster, seized him by the throat, and dashed him with such violence against the door in question, that the magistrate, stupefied by this sudden attack, and unable to speak a word or utter a cry, rolled over to the further end of the room, which was completely dark. Then, turning towards Morok, who, with his arm encumbered by the sling, made a rush for the staircase, the soldier caught him by his long, streaming hair, pulled him back, clasped him with hands of iron, clapped his hand over his mouth to stifle his outcries, and notwithstanding his desperate resistance, dragged him into the chamber, on the floor of which the burgomaster lay bruised and stunned.

Having double-locked the door, and put the key in his pocket, Dagobert descended the stairs at two bounds, and found himself in a passage that opened on the court-yard. The gate of the inn was shut, and there was no possibility of escape on that side. The rain fell in torrents. He could see through the window of a parlor, in which a fire was burning, the host and his people waiting for the decision of the burgomaster. To bolt the door of the passage, and thus intercept all communication with the yard, was for the soldier the affair of an instant, and he hastened upstairs again to rejoin the orphans.

Morok, recovering from his surprise, was calling for help with all his might; but, even if the distance had permitted him to be heard, the noise of the wind and rain would have drowned his outcries. Dagobert had about an hour before him, for it would require some time to elapse before the length of his interview with the magistrate would excite astonishment; and, suspicion or fear once awakened, it would be necessary to break open two doors—that which separated the passage from the court-yard, and that of the

room in which the burgomaster and the Prophet were confined.

"My children, it is now time to prove that you have a soldier's blood in your veins," said Dagobert, as he entered abruptly the chamber of the young girls, who were terrified at the racket they had heard for some minutes.

"Good heaven, Dagobert! what has happened?" cried Blanche.

"What do you wish us to do?" added Rose.

Without answering, the soldier ran to the bed, tore off the sheets, tied them strongly together, made a knot at one end, passed it over the top of the left half of the casement, and so shut it in. Thus made fast by the size of the knot, which could not slip through, the sheets, floating on the outside, touched the ground. The second half of the window was left open, to afford a passage to the fugitives.

The veteran next took his knapsack, the children's portmanteau, and the reindeer pelisse, and threw them all out of the window, making a sign to Spoil-sport to follow, to watch over them. The dog did not hesitate, but disappeared at a single bound. Rose and Blanche looked at Dagobert in amazement, without uttering a word.

"Now, children," said he to them, "the doors of the inn are shut, and it is by this way," pointing to the window, "that we must pass—if we would not be arrested, put in prison—you in one place, and I in the other—and have our journey altogether knocked on the head."

"Arrested! put in prison!" cried Rose.

"Separated from you!" exclaimed Blanche.

"Yes, my poor children!—They have killed Jovial—we must make our escape on foot, and try to reach Leipsic—when you are tired, I will carry you, and, though I have to beg my way, we will go through with it. But a quarter of an hour later, and all will be lost. Come, children, have trust in me—show that the daughters of General Simon are no cowards—and there is yet hope."

By a sympathetic movement, the sisters joined hands, as though they would meet the danger united. Their sweet faces, pale from the effect of so many painful emotions, were now expressive of simple resolve, founded on the blind faith they reposed in the devotion of the soldier.

"Be satisfied, Dagobert! we'll not be frightened," said Rose, in a firm voice.

"We will do what must be done," added Blanche, in a no less resolute tone.

"I was sure of it," cried Dagobert; "good blood is ever thicker than water. Come! you are light as feathers, the sheet is strong, it is hardly eight feet to the ground, and the pup is waiting for you."

"It is for me to go first—I am the eldest for to-day," cried Rose, when she had tenderly embraced Blanche; and she ran to the window, in order, if there were any danger, to expose herself to it before her sister.

Dagobert easily guessed the cause of this eagerness. "Dear children!" said he, "I understand you. But fear nothing for one another—there is no danger. I have myself fastened the sheet. Quick, my little Rose!"

As light as a bird, the young girl mounted the ledge of the window, and assisted by Dagobert, took hold of the sheet, and slid gently down according to the recommendation of the soldier, who, leaning out his whole body, encouraged her with his voice.

"Don't be afraid, sister!" said she, as soon as she touched the ground; "it is very easy to come down this way. And Spoil-sport is here, licking my hands." Blanche did not long keep her waiting; as courageous as her sister, she descended with the same success.

"Dear little creatures! what have they done to be so unfortunate?—Thousand thunders! there must be a curse upon the family," cried Dagobert, as, with heavy heart, he saw the pale, sweet face of the young girl disappear amid the gloom of the dark night, which violent squalls of wind and torrents of rain rendered still more dismal.

"Dagobert, we are waiting for you; come quickly!" said the orphans in a low voice, from beneath the window. Thanks to his tall stature, the soldier rather leaped than glided to the ground.

Dagobert and the two young girls had not fled from the inn of the White Falcon more than a quarter of an hour, when a long crash resounded through the house. The door had yielded to the efforts of the burgomaster and Morok, who had made use of a heavy table as a battering-ram. Guided by the light, they ran to the chamber of the orphans, now deserted. Morok saw the sheets floating from the casement, and cried: "Mr. Burgomaster, they have escaped by the window—they are on foot—in this dark and stormy night, they cannot be far."

"No doubt, we shall catch them, the miserable tramps!—Oh, I will be revenged! Quick, Morok; your honor is concerned as well as mine."

"My honor ?—Much more is concerned than that, Mr. Burgomaster," answered the Prophet, in a tone of great irritation. Then, rapidly descending the stairs, he opened the door of the court-yard, and shouted in a voice of thunder: "Goliath! unchain the dogs!—and, landlord! bring us lanterns, torches—arm your people—open the doors!—We must pursue the fugitives; they cannot escape us; we must have them—*alive or dead!*"

CHAPTER XV.

THE DESPATCHES.

When we read, in the rules of the order of the Jesuits, under the title *De formulâ scribendi* (Institut. 2, 11, p. 125, 129), the development of the 8th part of the constitutions, we are appalled by the number of letters, narratives, registers, and writings of all kinds, preserved in the archives of the society.

It is a police infinitely more exact and better informed than has ever been that of any state. Even the government of Venice found itself surpassed by the Jesuits: when it drove them out in 1606, it seized all their papers, and reproached them for *their great and laborious curiosity.* This police, this secret inquisition, carried to such a degree of perfection, may give some idea of the strength of a government, so well-informed, so persevering in its projects, so powerful by its unity, and, as the constitutions have it, by the *union of its members.* It is not hard to understand, what immense force must belong to the heads of this society, and how the general of the Jesuits could say to the Duke de Brissac: "*From this room, your grace, I govern not only Paris, but China—not only China, but the whole world—and all without any one knowing how it is done.*"

(CONSTITUTION OF THE JESUITS, edited by PAULIN, Paris, 1843.)

MOROK, the lion-tamer, seeing Dagobert deprived of his horse, and stripped of his money and papers, and thinking it was thus out of his power to continue his journey, had, previous to the arrival of the burgomaster, despatched Karl to Leipsic, as the bearer of a letter which he was to put immediately into the post. The address of this letter was as follows: "A Monsieur Rodin, Rue du Milieu des Ursins, Paris."

About the middle of this obscure and solitary street, situate below the level of the Quai Napoleon, which it joins not far from the Rue Saint Landry, there stood a house of unpretentious appearance, at the bottom of a dark and narrow court-yard, separated from the street by a low building in front, with arched doorway, and two windows protected by

thick iron bars. Nothing could be more simple than the interior of this quiet dwelling, as was sufficiently shown by the furniture of a pretty large room on the ground floor. The walls of this apartment were lined with old gray wainscot; the tiled floor was painted red, and carefully polished; curtains of white calico shaded the windows.

A sphere of about four feet in diameter, raised on a pedestal of massive oak, stood at one end of the room, opposite to the fireplace. Upon this globe, which was painted on a large scale, a host of little red crosses appeared scattered over all parts of the world—from the North to the South, from the rising to the setting sun, from the most barbarous countries, from the most distant isles, to the centres of civilization, to France itself. There was not a single country which did not present some spots marked with these red crosses, evidently indicative of stations, or serving as points of reference.

Before a table of black wood, loaded with papers, and resting against the wall near the chimney, a chair stood empty. Further on, between the two windows, was a large walnut-wood desk, surmounted by shelves full of pasteboard boxes.

At the end of the month of October, 1831, about eight o'clock in the morning, a man sat writing at this desk. This was M. Rodin, the correspondent of Morok, the brute-tamer.

About fifty years of age, he wore an old, shabby, olive greatcoat, with a greasy collar, a snuff-powdered cotton handkerchief for a cravat, and waistcoat and trousers of threadbare black cloth. His feet, buried in loose varnished shoes, rested on a petty piece of green baize upon the red, polished floor. His gray hair lay flat on his temples, and encircled his bald forehead; his eyebrows were scarcely marked; his upper eyelid, flabby and overhanging, like the membrane which shades the eyes of reptiles, half concealed his small, sharp, black eye. His thin lips, absolutely colorless, were hardly distinguishable from the wan hue of his lean visage, with its pointed nose and chin; and this livid mask (deprived as it were of lips) appeared only the more singular, from its maintaining a death-like immobility. Had it not been for the rapid movement of his fingers, as, bending over the desk, he scratched along with his pen, M. Rodin might have been mistaken for a corpse.

By the aid of a *cipher* (or secret alphabet) placed before him, he was copying certain passages from a long sheet full

of writing, in a manner quite unintelligible to those who did not possess the key to the system. Whilst the darkness of the day increased the gloom of the large, cold, naked-looking apartment, there was something awful in the chilling aspect of this man, tracing his mysterious characters in the midst of profound silence.

The clock struck eight. The dull sound of the knocker at the outer door was heard, then a bell tinkled twice, several doors opened and shut, and a new personage entered the chamber. On seeing him, M. Rodin rose from the desk, stuck his pen between his teeth, bowed with a deeply submissive air, and sat down again to his work without uttering a word.

The two formed a striking contrast to one another. The newcomer, though really older than he seemed, would have passed for thirty-six or thirty-eight years of age at most. His figure was tall and shapely, and few could have encountered the brightness of his large gray eye, brilliant as polished steel. His nose, broad at the commencement, formed a well-cut square at its termination; his chin was prominent, and the bluish tints of his close-shaved beard were contrasted with the bright carnation of his lips, and the whiteness of his fine teeth. When he took off his hat, to change it for a black velvet cap which he found on the small table, he displayed a quantity of light chestnut hair, not yet silvered by time. He was dressed in a long frock-coat, buttoned up to the neck in military fashion.

The piercing glance and broad forehead of this man revealed a powerful intellect, even as the development of his chest and shoulders announced a vigorous physical organization; whilst his gentlemanly appearance, the perfection of his gloves and boots, the light perfume which hung about his hair and person, the grace and ease of his least movements, betrayed what is called the man of the world, and left the impression that he had sought or might still seek every kind of success, from the most frivolous to the most serious. This rare combination of strength of mind, strength of body, and extreme elegance of manners, was in this instance rendered still more striking by the circumstance, that whatever there might be of haughtiness or command in the upper part of that energetic countenance, was softened down and tempered by a constant but not uniform smile—for, as occasion served, this smile became either kind or sly, cordial or gay, discreet or prepossessing, and thus augmented the insinuating charm of this man, who, once seen, was never

again forgotten. But, in yielding to this involuntary sympathy, the doubt occurred if the influence was for good—or for evil.

M. Rodin, the secretary of the newcomer, continued to write.

"Are there any letters from Dunkirk, Rodin?" inquired his master.

"Post not yet in."

"Without being positively uneasy as to my mother's health, since she was already convalescent," resumed the other, "I shall only be quite reassured by a letter from my excellent friend, the Princess de Saint-Dizier. I shall have good news this morning, I hope."

"It is to be desired," said the secretary, as humble and submissive as he was laconic and impassible.

"Certainly it is to be desired," resumed his master; "for one of the brightest days of my life was when the Princess de Saint-Dizier announced to me that this sudden and dangerous illness had yielded to the care and attention with which she surrounds my mother. Had it not been for that I must have gone down to her instantly, though my presence here is very necessary."

Then, approaching the desk, he added: "Is the summary of the foreign correspondence complete?"

"Here is the analysis."

"The letters are still sent under envelope to the places named, and are then brought here as I directed?"

"Always."

"Read to me the notes of this correspondence; if there are any letters for me to answer, I will tell you." And Rodin's master began to walk up and down the room, with his hands crossed behind his back, dictating observations of which Rodin took careful note.

The secretary turned to a pretty large pile of papers, and thus began:

"Don Raymond Olivarez acknowledges from Cadiz receipt of letter No. 19; he will conform to it, and deny all share in the abduction."

"Very well; file it."

"Count Romanoff, of Riga, finds himself in a position of pecuniary embarrassment."

"Let Duplessis send him fifty louis; I formerly served as captain in his regiment, and he has since given us good information."

"They have received at Philadelphia the last cargo of

Histories of France, expurgated for the use of the faithful: they require some more of the same sort."

"Take note of it, and write to Duplessis. Go on."

"M. Spindler sends from Namur the secret report on M. Ardouin."

"To be examined."

"M. Ardouin sends from the same town the secret report on M. Spindler."

"To be examined."

"Doctor Van Ostadt, of the same town, sends a confidential note on the subject of Messrs. Spindler and Ardouin."

"To be compared. Go on!"

"Count Malipierri, of Turin, announces that the donation of 300,000 francs is signed."

"Inform Duplessis. What next?"

"Don Stanislaus has just quitted the waters of Baden with Queen Marie Ernestine. He informs us that her majesty will receive with gratitude the promised advices, and will answer them with her own hand."

"Make a note of it. I will myself write to the queen."

Whilst Rodin was inscribing a few remarks on the margin of the paper, his master, continuing to walk up and down the room, found himself opposite to the globe marked with little red crosses, and stood contemplating it for a moment with a pensive air.

Rodin continued: "In consequence of the state of the public mind in certain parts of Italy, where sundry agitators have turned their eyes in the direction of France, Father Orsini writes from Milan, that it would be of importance to distribute profusely in that country, some little book, in which the French would be represented as impious and debauched, rapacious and bloody."

"The idea is excellent. We might turn to good account the excesses committed by our troops in Italy during the wars of the Republic. You must employ Jacques Dumoulin to write it. He is full of gall, spite, and venom: the pamphlet will be scorching. Besides, I may furnish a few notes; but you must not pay Dumoulin till after the delivery of the manuscript."

"That is well understood: for, if we were to pay him beforehand, he would be drunk for a week in some low den. It was thus we had to pay him twice over for his virulent attack on the pantheistic tendencies of Professor Martin's philosophy."

"Take note of it—and go on!"

"The merchant announces that the clerk is about to send the banker to give in his accounts. You understand?" added Rodin, after pronouncing these words with a marked emphasis.

"Perfectly," said the other, with a start; "they are but the expressions agreed on. What next?"

"But the clerk," continued the secretary, "is restrained by a last scruple."

After a moment's silence, during which the features of Rodin's master worked strongly, he thus resumed: "They must continue to act on the clerk's mind by silence and solitude; then, let him read once more the list of cases in which regicide is authorized and absolved. Go on!"

"The woman Sydney writes from Dresden, that she waits for instructions. Violent scenes of jealousy on her account have again taken place between the father and son; but neither from these new bursts of mutual hatred, nor from the confidential communications which each has made to her against his rival, has she yet been able to glean the information required. Hitherto, she has avoided giving the preference to one or the other; but, should this situation be prolonged, she fears it may rouse their suspicion. Which ought she then to choose—the father or the son?"

"The son—for jealous resentment will be much more violent and cruel in the old man, and, to revenge himself for the preference bestowed upon his son, he will perhaps tell what they have both such an interest to conceal. The next?"

"Within the last three years, two maid-servants of Ambrosius, whom we placed in that little parish in the mountains of the Valais, have disappeared, without any one knowing what has become of them. A third has just met with the same fate. The Protestants of the country are roused—talk of murder with frightful attendant circumstances——"

"Until there is proof positive and complete of the fact, Ambrosius must be defended against these infamous calumnies, the work of a party that never shrinks from monstrous inventions. Go on!"

"Thompson, of Liverpool, has at length succeeded in procuring for Justin the place of agent or manager to Lord Stewart, a rich Irish Catholic, whose head grows daily weaker."

"Let the fact be once verified, and Thompson shall have a premium of fifty louis. Make a note of it for Duplessis. Proceed."

"Frantz Dichstein, of Vienna," resumed Rodin, "announces that his father has just died of the cholera, in a little village at some leagues from that city: for the epidemic continues to advance slowly, coming from the north of Russia by way of Poland."

"It is true," said Rodin's master, interrupting him; "may its terrible march be stayed, and France be spared."

"Frantz Dichstein," resumed Rodin, "says that his two brothers are determined to contest the donation made by his father, but that he is of an opposite opinion."

"Consult the two persons that are charged with all matters of litigation. What next?"

"The Cardinal Prince d'Amalfi will conform to the three first points of the proposal: he demands to make a reservation upon the fourth point."

"No reserve!—Either full and absolute acceptance—or else war—and (mark me well) war without mercy—on him and his creatures. Go on!"

"Fra Paolo announces that the Prince Boccari, chief of a redoubtable secret society, in despair at seeing his friends accuse him of treachery, in consequence of suspicions excited in their minds by Fra Paolo himself, has committed suicide."

"Boccari! is it possible?" cried Rodin's master. "Boccari! the patriot Boccari! so dangerous a person!"

"The patriot Boccari," repeated the impassible secretary.

"Tell Duplessis to send an order for five-and-twenty louis to Fra Paolo. Make a note of it."

"Hausman informs us that the French dancer, Albertine Ducornet, is the mistress of the reigning prince: she has the most complete influence over him, and it would be easy through her means to arrive at the end proposed, but that she is herself governed by her lover (condemned in France as a forger), and that she does nothing without consulting him."

"Let Hausman get hold of this man—if his claims are reasonable, accede to them—and learn if the girl has any relations in Paris."

"The Duke d'Orbano announces, that the king his master will authorize the new establishment, but on the conditions previously stated."

"No conditions!—either a frank adhesion or a positive refusal. Let us know our friends from our enemies. The more unfavorable the circumstances, the more we must show firmness, and overbear opposition by confidence in ourselves."

"The same also announces, that the whole of the corps

diplomatique continues to support the claims of the father of that young Protestant girl, who refuses to quit the convent where she has taken refuge, unless it be to marry her lover against her father's will."

"Ah! the corps diplomatique continues to remonstrate in the father's name?"

"Yes."

"Then, continue to answer, that the spiritual power has nothing to do with the temporal."

At this moment, the bell of the outer door again sounded twice. "See who it is," said Rodin's master; and the secretary rose and left the room. The other continued to walk thoughtfully up and down, till, coming near to the huge globe, he stopped short before it.

For some time he contemplated, in profound silence, the innumerable little red crosses, which appeared to cover, as with an immense net, all the countries of the earth. Reflecting doubtless on the invisible action of his power, which seemed to extend over the whole world, the features of this man became animated, his large gray eye sparkled, his nostrils swelled, and his manly countenance assumed an indescribable expression of pride, energy, and daring. With haughty brow and scornful lip, he drew still nearer to the globe, and leaned his strong hand upon the pole.

This powerful pressure, an imperious movement, as of one taking possession, seemed to indicate, that he felt sure of governing this globe, on which he looked down from the height of his tall figure, and on which he rested his hand with so lofty and audacious an air of sovereignty.

But now he no longer smiled. His eye threatened, and his large forehead was clad with a formidable scowl. The artist, who had wished to paint the demon of craft and pride, the infernal genius of insatiable domination, could not have chosen a more suitable model.

When Rodin returned, the face of his master had recovered its ordinary expression. "It is the postman," said Rodin, showing the letters which he held in his hand; "there is nothing from Dunkirk."

"Nothing?" cried his master—and his painful emotion formed a strange contrast to his late haughty and implacable expression of countenance—"nothing? no news of my mother?—Thirty-six hours more, then, of anxiety."

"It seems to me, that, if the princess had bad news to give, she would have written. Probably, the improvement goes on."

"You are doubtless right, Rodin—but no matter—I am far from easy. If, to-morrow, the news should not be completely satisfactory, I set out for the estate of the princess. Why would my mother pass the autumn in that part of the country? The environs of Dunkirk, do not, I fear, agree with her."

After a few moments' silence, he added, as he continued to walk: "Well—these letters—whence are they?"

Rodin looked at the post-marks, and replied: "Out of the four there are three relative to the great and important affair of the medals."

"Thank heaven!—provided the news be favorable," cried his master, with an expression of uneasiness, which showed how much importance he attached to this affair.

"One is from Charlestown, and no doubt relative to Gabriel, the missionary," answered Rodin; "this other from Batavia, and no doubt concerns the Indian, Djalma. The third is from Leipsic, and will probably confirm that received yesterday, in which the lion-tamer, Morok, informed us, that, in accordance with his orders, and without his being compromised in any way, the daughters of General Simon would not be able to continue their journey."

At the name of General Simon, a cloud passed over the features of Rodin's master.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ORDERS.

The principal houses correspond with that in Paris; they are also in direct communication with the General, who resides at Rome. The correspondence of the Jesuits, so active, various, and organized in so wonderful a manner, has for its object to supply the heads with all the information they can require. Every day, the General receives a host of reports, which serve to check one another. In the central house, at Rome, are immense registers, in which are inscribed the names of all the Jesuits, of their adherents, and of all the considerable persons, whether friends or enemies, with whom they have any connection. In these registers are reported, without alteration, hatred or passion, the facts relating to the life of each individual. It is the most gigantic biographical collection that has ever been formed. The frailties of a woman, the secret errors of a statesman, are chronicled in this book with the same cold impartiality. Drawn up for the purpose of being useful, these biographies are necessarily exact. When the Jesuits wish to influence an individual, they have but to turn to this book, and they know immediately his life, his character, his parts, his faults, his projects, his

family, his friends, his most sacred ties. Conceive, what a superior facility of action this immense police-register, which includes the whole world, must give to any one society! It is not lightly that I speak of these registers; I have my facts from a person who has *seen* this collection, and who is perfectly well acquainted with the Jesuits. Here, then, is matter to reflect on for all those families, who admit freely into their houses the members of a community that carries its biographical researches to such a point.

(LIBRI, Member of the Institute. *Letters on the Clergy.*)

WHEN he had conquered the involuntary emotion which the name or remembrance of General Simon had occasioned, Rodin's master said to the secretary: "Do not yet open the letters from Leipsic, Charlestown, and Batavia; the information they contain will doubtless find its place presently. It will save our going over the same ground twice."

The secretary looked inquiringly at his master.

The latter continued—"Have you finished the note relating to the medals?"

"Here it is," replied the secretary; "I was just finishing my interpretation of the cipher."

"Read it to me, in the order of the facts. You can append to it the news contained in those three letters."

"True," said Rodin; "in that way the letters will find their right place."

"I wish to see," rejoined the other, "whether this note is clear and fully explanatory; you did not forget that the person it is intended for ought not to know all?"

"I bore it in mind, and drew up the paper accordingly."

"Read," said the master.

M. Rodin read as follows, slowly and deliberately:

"'A hundred and fifty years ago, a French Protestant family, foreseeing the speedy revocation of the edict of Nantes, went into voluntary exile, in order to avoid the just and rigorous decrees already issued against the members of the reformed church—those indomitable foes of our holy religion.

"'Some members of this family sought refuge in Holland, and afterwards in the Dutch colonies; others in Poland, others in Germany; some in England, and some in America.

"'It is supposed that only seven descendants remain of this family, which underwent strange vicissitudes since; its present representatives are found in all ranks of society, from the sovereign to the mechanic.

"'These descendants, direct or indirect, are:

"'On the mother's side—

"'Rose and Blanche Simon—minors.

"'General Simon married, at Warsaw, a descendant of the said family.

"'François Hardy, manufacturer at Plessis, near Paris.

"'Prince Djalma, son of Kadja-sing, King of Mondi.

"'Kadja-sing, married, in 1802, a descendant of the said family, then settled at Batavia, in the Island of Java, a Dutch colony.

"'On the father's side—

"'Jacques Rennepont, surnamed Sleepinbuff, mechanic.

"'Adrienne de Cardoville, daughter of the Count of Rennepont, Duke of Cardoville.

"'Gabriel Rennepont, priest of the foreign missions.

"'All the members of this family possess, or should possess, a bronze medal bearing the following inscriptions:

VICTIM of L. C. D. J. Pray for me! ——— PARIS, February the 13th, 1682.	AT PARIS, Rue Saint François, No. 3, In a century and a half you will be. February the 13th, 1832. ——— PRAY FOR ME!

"'These words and dates show that all of them have a great interest to be at Paris on the 13th of February, 1832; and that, not by proxy, but in person, whether they are minors, married or single.

"'But other persons have an immense interest that none of the descendants of this family be at Paris on the 13th February, except Gabriel Rennepont, priest of the foreign missions.

"'At all hazards, therefore, Gabriel *must* be *the only person* present at the appointment made with the descendants of this family, a century and a half ago.

"'To prevent the other six persons from reaching Paris on the said day, or to render their presence of no effect, much has been already done; but much remains to be done to ensure the success of this affair, which is considered as the most vital and most important of the age, on account of its probable results.'"

"'Tis but too true," observed Rodin's master, interrupting him, and shaking his head pensively. "And, moreover, that the consequences of success are incalculable, and there is no foreseeing what may follow failure. In a word, it almost involves a question of existence or non-existence during several years. To succeed, therefore, 'all possible means must be employed. Nothing must be shunned,'

except, however, that appearances must be skilfully maintained."

"I have written it," said Rodin, having added the words his master had just dictated, who then said,

"Continue."

Rodin read on:

"'To forward or secure the affair in question, it is necessary to give some private and secret particulars respecting the seven persons who represent this family.

"'The truth of these particulars may be relied on. In case of need they might be completed in the most minute degree; for contradictory information having been given, very lengthened evidence has been obtained. The order in which the names of the persons stand will be observed, and events that have happened up to the present time will only be mentioned.

"'NOTE, No. I.

"'Rose and Blanche Simon, twin sisters, about fifteen years of age; very pretty, so much alike, one might be taken for the other; mild and timid disposition, but capable of enthusiasm. Brought up in Siberia by their mother, a woman of strong mind and deistical sentiments, they are wholly ignorant of our holy religion.

"'General Simon, separated from his wife before they were born, is not aware, even now, that he has two daughters.

"'It was hoped that their presence in Paris, on the 13th of February, would be prevented, by sending their mother to a place of exile, much more distant than the one first allotted her; but their mother dying, the Governor of Siberia, who is wholly ours, supposing, by a deplorable mistake, that the measure only affected the wife of General Simon personally, unfortunately allowed the girls to return to France, under the guidance of an old soldier.

"'This man is enterprising, faithful, and determined. He is noted down as *dangerous*.

"'The Simon girls are inoffensive. It is hoped on fair grounds, that they are now detained in the neighborhood of Leipsic.'"

Rodin's master interrupted him, saying:

"Now, read the letter just received from Leipsic; it may complete the information."

Rodin read it, and exclaimed:

"Excellent news! The maidens and their guide had succeeded in escaping during the night from the White Falcon Tavern, but all three were overtaken and seized about a league from Mockern. They have been transferred to Leipsic, where they are imprisoned as vagabonds; their guide, the soldier, is accused and condemned of resisting the authorities, and using violence to a magistrate."

"It is almost certain, then, considering the tedious mode of proceeding in Germany (otherwise we would see to it), that the girls will not be able to be here on the 13th February," added Rodin's master. "Append this to the note on the back."

The secretary obeyed, and endorsed "An abstract of Morok's letter."

"It is written," he then added.

"Go on," resumed his master.

Rodin continued reading.

"'NOTE, No. II.

"'François Hardy, manufacturer at Plessis, near Paris, forty years old; a steady, rich, intelligent, active, honest, well-informed man, idolized by his workmen—thanks to numberless innovations to promote their welfare. Never attending to the duties of our holy religion. Noted down as a very dangerous man: but the hatred and envy he excites among other manufacturers, especially in M. le Baron Tripeaud, his competitor, may easily be turned against him. If other means of action on his account, and against him, are necessary, the evidence may be consulted; it is very voluminous. This man has been marked and watched for a long time.

"'He has been so effectually misguided with respect to the medal, that he is completely deceived as to the interests it represents. He is, however, constantly watched, surrounded, and governed, without suspecting it; one of his dearest friends deceives him, and through his means we know his secret thoughts.

"'NOTE, No. III.

"'Prince Djalma; eighteen; energetic and generous, haughty, independent and wild; favorite of General Simon, who commanded the troops of his father, Kadja-sing, in the struggle maintained by the latter against the English in

India. Djalma is mentioned only by way of reminder, for his mother died young, while her parents were living. They resided at Batavia. On the death of the latter, neither Djalma nor the king, his father, claimed their little property. It is, therefore, certain that they are ignorant of the grave interests connected with the possession of the medal in question, which formed part of the property of Djalma's mother.' "

Rodin's master interrupted him.

"Now read the letter from Batavia, and complete the information respecting Djalma."

Rodin read, and then observed:

"Good news again. Joshua Van Dael, merchant at Batavia (he was educated in our Pondicherry establishment), learns from his correspondent at Calcutta that the old Indian king was killed in the last battle with the English. His son, Djalma, deprived of the paternal throne, is provisionally detained as a prisoner of state in an Indian fortress."

"We are at the end of October," said Rodin's master. "If Prince Djalma were to leave India now, he could scarcely reach Paris by the month of February."

"Van Dael," continued Rodin, "regrets that he has not been able to prove his zeal in this case. Supposing Prince Djalma set at liberty, or having effected his escape, it is certain he would come to Batavia to claim his inheritance from his mother, since he has nothing else left him in the world. In that case, you may rely on Van Dael's devotedness. In return, he solicits very precise information, by the next post, respecting the fortune of M. le Baron Tripeaud, banker and manufacturer, with whom he has business transactions."

"Answer that point evasively. Van Dael as yet has only shown zeal; complete the information respecting Djalma from these new tidings."

Rodin wrote.

But in a few minutes his master said to him with a singular expression:

"Does not Van Dael mention General Simon in connection with Djalma's imprisonment and his father's death?"

"He does not allude to him," said the secretary, continuing his task.

Rodin's master was silent, and paced the room.

In a few moments Rodin said to him: "I have done it."

"Go on, then."

"'NOTE, No. IV.

"'Jacques Rennepont, surnamed "Sleepinbuff," *i. e.* Lienaked, workman in Baron Tripeaud's factory. This artisan is drunken, idle, noisy, and prodigal; he is not without sense, but idleness and debauch have ruined him. A clever agent, on whom we rely, has become acquainted with his mistress, Cephyse Soliveau, nicknamed the Bacchanal Queen. Through her means, the agent has formed such ties with him that he may even now be considered beyond the reach of the interests that ought to insure his presence in Paris on the 13th of February.

"'NOTE, No. V.

"'Gabriel Rennepont, priest of foreign missions, distant relation of the above, but he is alike ignorant of the existence of his relative and the relationship. An orphan foundling, he was adopted by Frances Baudoin, the wife of a soldier going by the name Dagobert.

"'Should this soldier, contrary to expectation, reach Paris, his wife would be a powerful means of influencing him. She is an excellent creature, ignorant and credulous, of exemplary piety, over whom we have long had unlimited control. She prevailed on Gabriel to take orders, notwithstanding his repugnance.

"'Gabriel is five-and-twenty; disposition as angelic as his countenance; rare and solid virtues; unfortunately he was brought up with his adopted brother, Agricola, Dagobert's son. This Agricola is a poet and workman—but an excellent workman; he is employed by M. Hardy; has imbibed the most detestable doctrines; fond of his mother; honest, laborious, but without religious feeling. Marked as very dangerous. This causes his intimacy with Gabriel to be feared.

"'The latter, notwithstanding his excellent qualities, sometimes causes uneasiness. We have even delayed confiding in him fully. A false step might make him, too, one of the most dangerous. Much precaution must be used then, especially till the 13th of February; since, we repeat it, on him, on his presence in Paris at that time, depend immense hopes and equally important interests.

"'Among other precautions, we have consented to his taking part in the American mission, for he unites with angelic sweetness of character a calm intrepidity and

adventurous spirit which could only be satisfied by allowing him to engage in the perilous existence of the missionaries. Luckily, his superiors at Charlestown have received the strictest orders not to endanger, on any account, so precious a life. They are to send him to Paris, at least a month or two before February 13th.' "

Rodin's master again interrupted him, and said: "Read the letter from Charlestown, and see what it tells you, in order to complete the information upon this point also."

When he had read the letter, Rodin went on: "Gabriel is expected every day from the Rocky Mountains, whither he had absolutely insisted on going alone upon a mission."

"What imprudence!"

"He has no doubt escaped all danger, as he himself announces his speedy return to Charlestown. As soon as he arrives, which cannot (they write) be later than the middle of this month, he will be shipped off for France."

"Add this to the note which concerns him," said Rodin's master.

"It is written," replied the secretary, a few moments later.

"Proceed, then," said his master. Rodin continued:

"'NOTE, No. VI.

"'ADRIENNE RENNEPONT DE CARDOVILLE.

"'Distantly related (without knowing it) to Jacques Rennepont, *alias* Sleepinbuff, and Gabriel Rennepont, missionary priest. She will soon be twenty-one years of age, the most attractive person in the world—extraordinary beauty, though red-haired—a mind remarkable for its originality—immense fortune—all the animal instincts. The incredible independence of her character makes one tremble for the future fate of this young person. Happily, her appointed guardian, Baron Tripeaud (a baron of 1829 creation, formerly agent to the late Count of Rennepont, Duke of Cardoville), is quite in the interest, and almost in the dependence, of the young lady's aunt. We count, with reason, upon this worthy and respectable relative, and on the Baron Tripeaud, to oppose and repress the singular, unheard-of designs which this young person, as resolute as independent, does not fear to avow—and which, unfortunately, cannot be turned to account in the interest of the affair in question—for——' "

Rodin was here interrupted by two discreet taps at the door. The secretary rose, went to see who knocked, remained a moment without, and then returned with two letters in his hand, saying: "The princess has profited by the departure of a courier to——"

"Give me the letter!" cried his master, without leaving him time to finish. "At length," he added, "I shall have news of my mother!"

He had scarcely read the first few lines of the letter, when he grew deadly pale, and his features took an expression of painful astonishment and poignant grief. "My mother!" he cried, "oh, heavens! my mother!"

"What misfortune has happened!" asked Rodin, with a look of alarm, as he rose at the exclamation of his master.

"The symptoms of improvement were fallacious," replied the other, dejectedly; "she has now relapsed into a nearly hopeless state. And yet the doctor thinks my presence might save her, for she calls for me without ceasing. She wishes to see me for the last time, that she may die in peace. Oh, that wish is sacred! Not to grant it would be matricide. If I can but arrive in time! Travelling day and night, it will take nearly two days."

"Alas! what a misfortune!" said Rodin, wringing his hands, and raising his eyes to heaven.

His master rang the bell violently, and said to the old servant that opened the door: "Just put what is indispensable into the portmanteau of my travelling-carriage. Let the porter take a cab, and go for post-horses instantly. Within an hour, I must be on the road. Mother! mother!" cried he, as the servant departed in haste. "Not to see her again—oh, it would be frightful!" And sinking upon a chair, overwhelmed with sorrow, he covered his face with his hands.

This great grief was sincere—he loved tenderly his mother: that divine sentiment had accompanied him, unalterable and pure, through all the phases of a too often guilty life.

After a few minutes, Rodin ventured to say to his master, as he showed him the second letter: "This, also, has just been brought from M. Duplessis. It is very important—very pressing——"

"See what it is, and answer it. I have no head for business."

"The letter is confidential," said Rodin, presenting it to his master. "I dare not open it, as you may see by the mark on the cover."

At sight of this mark, the countenance of Rodin's master assumed an indefinable expression of respect and fear. With a trembling hand he broke the seal. The note contained only the following words: "Leave all business, and without losing a minute, set out and come. M. Duplessis will replace you. He has orders."

"Great God!" cried this man in despair. "Set out before I have seen my mother! It is frightful, impossible—it would perhaps kill her—yes, it would be matricide!"

Whilst he uttered these words, his eyes rested on the huge globe, marked with red crosses. A sudden revolution seemed to take place within him; he appeared to repent of the violence of his regrets; his face, though still sad, became once more calm and grave. He handed the fatal letter to his secretary, and said to him, whilst he stifled a sigh: "To be classed under its proper number."

Rodin took the letter, wrote a number upon it, and placed it in a particular box. After a moment's silence, his master resumed: "You will take orders from M. Duplessis, and work with him. You will deliver to him the note on the affair of the medals; he knows to whom to address it. You will write to Batavia, Leipsic, and Charlestown, in the sense agreed. Prevent, at any price, the daughters of General Simon from quitting Leipsic; hasten the arrival of Gabriel in Paris; and should Prince Djalma come to Batavia, tell M. Joshua Van Dael, that we count on his zeal and obedience to keep him there."

And this man, who, while his dying mother called to him in vain, could thus preserve his presence of mind, entered his own apartments; whilst Rodin busied himself with the answers he had been ordered to write, and transcribed them in cipher.

In about three quarters of an hour, the bells of the post-horses were heard jingling without. The old servant again entered, after discreetly knocking at the door, and said: "The carriage is ready."

Rodin nodded, and the servant withdrew. The secretary, in his turn, went to knock at the door of the inner room. His master appeared, still grave and cold, but fearfully pale, and holding a letter in his hand.

"This for my mother," said he to Rodin; "you will send a courier on the instant."

"On the instant," replied the secretary.

"Let the three letters for Leipsic, Batavia and Charlestown, leave to-day by the ordinary channel. They are of the last importance. You know it."

Those were his last words. Executing merciless orders with a merciless obedience, he departed without even attempting to see his mother. His secretary accompanied him respectfully to his carriage.

"What road, sir?" asked the postilion, turning round on his saddle.

"The road to ITALY!" answered Rodin's master, with so deep a sigh that it almost resembled a sob.

* * * * * * *

As the horses started at full gallop, Rodin made a low bow; then he returned to the large, cold, bare apartment. The attitude, countenance, and gait of this personage seemed to have undergone a sudden change. He appeared to have increased in dimensions. He was no longer an automaton, moved by the mechanism of humble obedience. His features, till now impassible, his glance, hitherto subdued, became suddenly animated with an expression of diabolical craft; a sardonic smile curled his thin, pale lips, and a look of grim satisfaction relaxed his cadaverous face.

In turn, he stopped before the huge globe. In turn, he contemplated it in silence, even as his master had done. Then, bending over it, and embracing it, as it were, in his arms, he gloated with his reptile-eye on it for some moments, drew his coarse finger along its polished surface, and tapped his flat, dirty nail on three of the places dotted with red crosses. And, whilst he thus pointed to three towns, in very different parts of the world, he named them aloud, with a sneer. "Leipsic—Charlestown—Batavia."

"In each of these three places," he added, "distant as they are from one another, there exist persons who little think that here, in this obscure street, from the recesses of this chamber, wakeful eyes are upon them—that all their movements are followed, all their actions known—and that hence will issue new instructions, which deeply concern them, and which will be inexorably executed; for an interest is at stake, which may have a powerful influence on Europe—on the world. Luckily, we have friends at Leipsic, Charlestown, and Batavia."

This funny, old, sordid, ill-dressed man, with his livid and death-like countenance, thus crawling over the sphere before him, appeared still more awful than his master, when the latter, erect and haughty, had imperiously laid his hand upon that globe, which he seemed desirous of subjecting by the strength of his pride and courage. The one resembled the eagle, that hovers above his prey—the other the reptile, that envelops its victim in its inextricable folds.

After some minutes, Rodin approached his desk, rubbing his hands briskly together, and wrote the following epistle in a cipher unknown even to his master:

"PARIS, ¾ past 9 A. M.

"He is gone—but he hesitated!

"When he received the order, his dying mother had just summoned him to her. He might, they told him, save her by his presence, and he exclaimed: 'Not to go to my mother would be matricide!'

"Still, he is gone—but he hesitated. I keep my eye upon him continually. These lines will reach Rome at the same time as himself.

"P. S.—Tell the Cardinal-Prince that he may rely on me, but I hope for his active aid in return."

When he had folded and sealed this letter, Rodin put it into his pocket. The clock struck ten, M. Rodin's hour for breakfast. He arranged and locked up his papers in a drawer, of which he carried away the key, brushed his old greasy hat with his sleeve, took a patched umbrella in his hand, and went out.*

* * * * * *

Whilst these two men, in the depths of their obscure retreat, were thus framing a plot, which was to involve the seven descendants of a race formerly proscribed—a strange mysterious defender was planning how to protect this family, which was also his own.

INTERVAL.

THE WANDERING JEW'S SENTENCE.

THE site is wild and rugged. It is a lofty eminence covered with huge boulders of sandstone, between which rise birch trees and oaks, their foliage already yellowed by autumn. These tall trees stand out from the background of

* Having cited the excellent, courageous letters of M. Libri, and the curious work edited by M. Paulin, it is our duty likewise to mention many bold and conscientious writings on the subject of the "Society of Jesus," recently published by the elder Dupin, Michelet, Quinet, Génin, and the Count de Saint Priest—works of high and impartial intellects, in which the fatal theories of the order are admirably exposed and condemned. We esteem ourselves happy, if we can bring one stone towards the erection of the strong, and, we hope, durable embankment which these generous hearts and noble minds are raising against the encroachments of an impure and always menacing flood.—E. S.

red light, which the sun has left in the west, resembling the reflection of a great fire.

From this eminence the eye looks down into a deep valley, shady, fertile, and half-veiled in light vapor by the evening mist. The rich meadows, the tufts of bushy trees, the fields from which the ripe corn has been gathered in, all blend together in one dark, uniform tint, which contrasts with the limpid azure of the heavens. Steeples of gray stone or slate lift their pointed spires, at intervals, from the midst of this valley; for many villages are spread about it, bordering a high-road which leads from the north to the west.

It is the hour of repose—the hour when, for the most part, every cottage window brightens to the joyous crackling of the rustic hearth, and shines afar through shade and foliage, whilst clouds of smoke issue from the chimneys, and curl up slowly towards the sky. But now, strange to say, every hearth in the country seems cold and deserted. Stranger and more fatal still, every steeple rings out a funeral knell. Whatever there is of activity, movement, or life, appears concentrated in that lugubrious and far-sounding vibration.

Lights begin to show themselves in the dark villages, but they rise not from the cheerful and pleasant rustic hearth. They are as red as the fires of the herdsmen, seen at night through the midst of the fog. And then these lights do not remain motionless. They creep slowly towards the churchyard of every village. Louder sounds the death-knell, the air trembles beneath the strokes of so many bells, and, at rare intervals, the funeral chant rises faintly to the summit of the hill.

Why so many interments? What valley of desolation is this, where the peaceful songs which follow the hard labors of the day are replaced by the death dirge? where the repose of evening is exchanged for the repose of eternity? What is this valley of the shadow, where every village mourns for its many dead, and buries them at the same hour of the same night?

Alas! the deaths are so sudden and numerous and frightful that there is hardly time to bury the dead. During day the survivors are chained to the earth by hard but necessary toil; and only in the evening, when they return from the fields, are they able, though sinking with fatigue, to dig those other furrows, in which their brethren are to lie heaped like grains of corn,

And this valley is not the only one that has seen the desolation. During a series of fatal years, many villages, many towns, many cities, many great countries, have seen, like this valley, their hearths deserted and cold—have seen, like this valley, mourning take the place of joy, and the death-knell substituted for the noise of festival—have wept in the same day for their many dead, and buried them at night by the lurid glare of torches.

For, during those fatal years, an awful wayfarer had slowly journeyed over the earth, from one pole to the other—from the depths of India and Asia to the ice of Siberia—from the ice of Siberia to the borders of the seas of France.

This traveller, mysterious as death, slow as eternity, implacable as fate, terrible as the hand of heaven, was the CHOLERA!

* * * * * * *

The tolling of bells and the funeral chants still rose from the depths of the valley to the summit of the hill, like the complaining of a mighty voice; the glare of the funeral torches was still seen afar through the mist of evening; it was the hour of twilight—that strange hour, which gives to the most solid forms a vague, indefinite fantastic appearance—when the sound of firm and regular footsteps was heard on the stony soil of the rising ground, and, between the black trunks of the trees, a man passed slowly onward.

His figure was tall, his head was bowed upon his breast; his countenance was noble, gentle, and sad; his eyebrows, uniting in the midst, extended from one temple to the other, like a fatal mark on his forehead.

This man did not seem to hear the distant tolling of so many funeral bells—and yet, a few days before, repose and happiness, health and joy, had reigned in those villages through which he had slowly passed, and which he now left behind him, mourning and desolate. But the traveller continued on his way, absorbed in his own reflections.

"The 13th of February approaches," thought he; "the day approaches, in which the descendants of my beloved sister, the last scions of our race, should meet in Paris. Alas! it is now a hundred and fifty years since, for the third time, persecution scattered this family over all the earth—this family, that I have watched over with tenderness for eighteen centuries, through all its migrations and exiles, its changes of religion, fortune, and name!

"Oh! for this family, descended from the sister of the

poor shoemaker,* what grandeur and what abasement, what obscurity and what splendor, what misery and what glory! By how many crimes has it been sullied, by how many virtues honored! The history of this single family is the history of the human race!

"Passing, in the course of so many generations, through the veins of the poor and the rich, of the sovereign and the bandit, of the wise man and the fool, of the coward and the brave, of the saint and the atheist, the blood of my sister has transmitted itself to this hour.

"What scions of this family are now remaining? Seven only.

"Two orphans, the daughters of proscribed parents—a dethroned prince—a poor missionary priest—a man of the middle class—a young girl of a great name and large fortune—a mechanic.

"Together, they comprise in themselves the virtues, the courage, the degradation, the splendor, the miseries of our species!

"Siberia—India—America—France—behold the divers places where fate has thrown them!

"My instinct teaches me when one of them is in peril. Then, from the North to the South, from the East to the West, I go to seek them. Yesterday amid the polar frosts—to-day in the temperate zone—to-morrow beneath the fires of the tropics—but often, alas! at the moment when my presence might save them, the invisible hand impels me, the whirlwind carries me away, and the voice speaks in my ear: 'Go on! Go on!'

"Oh, that I might only finish my task!—'Go on!'—A single hour—only a single hour of repose!—'Go on!'—Alas! I leave those I love on the brink of the abyss!—'Go on! Go on!'

"Such is my punishment. If it is great, my crime was greater still! An artisan, devoted to privations and misery, my misfortunes had made me cruel.

"Oh, cursed, cursed be the day, when, as I bent over my work, sullen with hate and despair, because, in spite of my

* It is known that, according to the legend, the Wandering Jew was a shoemaker at Jerusalem. The Saviour, carrying his cross, passed before the house of the artisan, and asked him to be allowed to rest an instant on the stone bench at his door. "Go on! go on!" said the Jew harshly, pushing him away. "Thou shalt go on till the end of time," answered the Saviour, in a stern though sorrowful tone. For further details, see the eloquent and learned notice by Charles Magnin, appended to the magnificent poem of "Ahasuerus," by Ed. Quinet.—E. S.

incessant labor, I and mine wanted for everything, the Saviour passed before my door.

"Reviled, insulted, covered with blows, hardly able to sustain the weight of his heavy cross, He asked me to let Him rest a moment on my stone bench. The sweat poured from His forehead. His feet were bleeding, He was well-nigh sinking with fatigue, and He said to me, in a mild, heart-piercing voice: 'I suffer!' 'And I too suffer,' I replied, as with harsh anger I pushed Him from the place; 'I suffer, and no one comes to help me! I find no pity, and will give none. Go on! go on!' Then, with a deep sigh of pain, He answered, and spake this sentence: 'Verily, thou shalt go on till the day of thy redemption, for so wills the Father which art in heaven!'

"And so my punishment began. Too late I opened these eyes to the light, too late I learned repentance and charity, too late I understood those divine words of Him I had outraged, words which should be the law of the whole human race, 'LOVE YE ONE ANOTHER.'

"In vain through successive ages, gathering strength and eloquence from those celestial words, have I labored to earn my pardon, by filling with commiseration and love hearts that were overflowing with envy and bitterness, by inspiring many a soul with a sacred horror of oppression and injustice. For me the day of mercy has not yet dawned!

"And even as the first man, by his fall, devoted his posterity to misfortune, it would seem as if I, the workman, had consigned the whole race of artisans to endless sorrows, and as if they were expiating my crime: for they alone, during these eighteen centuries, have not yet been delivered.

"For eighteen centuries, the powerful and the happy of this world have said to the toiling people what I said to the imploring and suffering Saviour: 'Go on! go on!' And the people, sinking with fatigue, bearing their heavy cross, have answered in the bitterness of their grief: 'Oh, for pity's sake! a few moments of repose; we are worn out with toil.' —'Go on!'—'And if we perish in our pain, what will become of our little children and our aged mothers?'—'Go on! go on!' And, for eighteen centuries, they and I have continued to struggle forward and to suffer, and no charitable voice has yet pronounced the word 'Enough!'

"Alas! such is my punishment. It is immense, it is twofold. I suffer in the name of humanity, when I see these wretched multitudes consigned without respite to profitless

and oppressive toil. I suffer in the name of my family, when, poor and wandering, I am unable to bring aid to the descendants of my dear sister. But, when the sorrow is above my strength, when I foresee some danger from which I cannot preserve my own, then my thoughts, travelling over the world, go in search of that woman like me accursed, that daughter of a queen, who, like me, the son of a laborer, wanders, and will wander on, till the day of her redemption.*

"Once in a century, as two planets draw nigh to each other in their revolutions, I am permitted to meet this woman during the dread week of the Passion. And after this interview, filled with terrible remembrances and boundless griefs, wandering stars of eternity, we pursue our infinite course.

"And this woman, the only one upon earth who, like me, sees the end of every century, and exclaims: 'What! another?' this woman responds to my thought, from the furthest extremity of the world. She, who alone shares my terrible destiny, has chosen to share also the only interest that has consoled me for so many ages. Those descendants of my dear sister, she too loves, she too protects them. For them she journeys likewise from East to West and from North to South.

"But alas! the invisible hand impels her, the whirlwind carries her away, and the voice speaks in her ear: 'Go on!' —'Oh that I might finish my sentence!' repeats she also, —'Go on!'—'A single hour—only a single hour of repose!' —'Go on!'—'I leave those I love on the brink of the abyss.'—'Go on! Go on!'——"

* * * * * * *

Whilst this man thus went over the hill absorbed in his thoughts, the light evening breeze increased almost to a gale, a vivid flash streamed across the sky, and long, deep whistlings announced the coming of a tempest.

On a sudden this doomed man, who could no longer weep or smile, started with a shudder. No physical pain could reach him, and yet he pressed his hand hastily to his heart, as though he had experienced a cruel pang. "Oh!" cried he; "I feel it. This hour, many of those whom I love—the descendants of my dear sister—suffer, and are in great peril. Some in the centre of India—some in America—some here

* According to a legend very little known, for which we are indebted to the kindness of M. Maury, the learned sub-librarian of the Institute, Herodias was condemned to wander till the day of judgment, for having asked for the death of St. John the Baptist.—E. S.

in Germany. The struggle recommences, the detestable passions are again awake. Oh, thou that hearest me—thou, like myself wandering and accursed—Herodias! help me to protect them! May my invocation reach thee, in those American solitudes where thou now lingerest—and may we arrive in time!"

Thereon an extraordinary event happened. Night was come. The man made a movement, precipitately, to retrace his steps—but an invisible force prevented him, and carried him forward in the opposite direction.

At this moment, the storm burst forth in its murky majesty. One of those whirlwinds, which tear up trees by the roots, and shake the foundations of the rocks, rushed over the hill rapid and loud as thunder.

In the midst of the roaring of the hurricane, by the glare of the fiery flashes, the man with the black mark on his brow was seen descending the hill, stalking with huge strides among the rocks, and between trees bent beneath the efforts of the storm.

The tread of this man was no longer slow, firm, and steady—but painfully irregular, like that of one impelled by an irresistible power, or carried along by the whirl of a frightful wind. In vain he extended his supplicating hands to heaven. Soon he disappeared in the shades of night, and amid the roar of the tempest.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE AJOUPA.

While Rodin despatched his cosmopolite correspondence, from his retreat in the Rue du Milieu des Ursins, in Paris—while the daughters of General Simon, after quitting as fugitives the White Falcon, were detained prisoners at Leipsic along with Dagobert—other scenes, deeply interesting to these different personages, were passing, almost as it were at the same moment, at the other extremity of the world, in the furthermost parts of Asia—that is to say, in the island of Java, not far from the city of Batavia, the residence of M. Joshua Van Dael, one of the correspondents of Rodin.

Java! magnificent and fatal country, where the most admirable flowers conceal hideous reptiles, where the bright-

est fruits contain subtle poisons, where grow splendid trees, whose very shadow is death—where the gigantic vampire bat sucks the blood of its victims whilst it prolongs their sleep, by surrounding them with a fresh and balmy air, no fan moving so rapidly as the great perfumed wings of this monster!

The month of October, 1831, draws near its close. It is noon—an hour well nigh mortal to him who encounters the fiery heat of the sun, which spreads a sheet of dazzling light over the deep blue enamel of the sky.

An ajoupa, or hut, made of cane mats, suspended from long bamboos, which are driven far into the ground, rises in the midst of the bluish shadows cast by a tuft of trees, whose glittering verdure resembles green porcelain. These quaintly formed trees, rounded into arches, pointing like spires, overspreading like parasols, are so thick in foliage, so entangled one with the other, that their dome is impenetrable to the rain.

The soil, ever marshy, notwithstanding the insupportable heat, disappears beneath an inextricable mass of creepers, ferns, and tufted reeds, of a freshness and vigor of vegetation almost incredible, reaching nearly to the top of the ajoupa, which lies hid like a nest among the grass.

Nothing can be more suffocating than the atmosphere, heavily laden with moist exhalations like the steam of hot water, and impregnated with the strongest and sharpest scents; for the cinnamon-tree, ginger-plant, stephanotis and Cape jasmine, mixed with these trees and creepers, spread around in puffs their penetrating odors. A roof, formed of large Indian fig-leaves, covers the cabin; at one end is a square opening, which serves for a window, shut in with a fine lattice-work of vegetable fibres, so as to prevent the reptiles and venomous insects from creeping into the ajoupa. The huge trunk of a dead tree, still standing, but much bent, and with its summit reaching to the roof of the ajoupa, rises from the midst of the brushwood. From every crevice in its black, rugged, mossy bark, springs a strange, almost fantastic flower; the wing of a butterfly is not of a finer tissue, of a more brilliant purple, of a more glossy black: those unknown birds we see in our dreams, have no more grotesque forms than these specimens of the orchis—winged flowers, that seem always ready to fly from their frail and leafless stalks. The long, flexible stems of the cactus, which might be taken for reptiles, encircle also this trunk, and clothe it with their bunches of silvery white, shaded inside

with bright orange. These flowers emit a strong scent of vanilla.

A serpent, of a brick-red, about the thickness of a large quill, and five or six inches long, half protrudes its flat head from one of those enormous, perfumed calyces, in which it lies closely curled up.

Within the ajoupa, a young man is extended on a mat in a profound sleep. His complexion of a clear golden yellow, gives him the appearance of a statue of pale bronze, on which a ray of sun is playing. His attitude is simple and graceful; his right arm sustains his head, a little raised and turned on one side; his ample robe of white muslin, with hanging sleeves, leaves uncovered his chest and arms worthy of the Antoinoüs. Marble is not more firm, more polished than his skin, the golden hue of which contrasts strongly with the whiteness of his garments. Upon his broad manly chest a deep scar is visible—the mark of the musket-ball he received in defending the life of General Simon, the father of Rose and Blanche.

Suspended from his neck, he wears a medal similar to that in the possession of the two sisters. This Indian is Djalma.

His features are at once very noble and very beautiful. His hair of a blue black, parted upon his forehead, falls waving, but not curled, over his shoulders; whilst his eyebrows, boldly and yet delicately defined, are of as deep a jet as the long eyelashes, that cast their shadow upon his beardless cheek. His bright, red lips are slightly apart, and he breathes uneasily; his sleep is heavy and troubled, for the heat becomes every moment more and more suffocating.

Without, the silence is profound. Not a breath of air is stirring. Yet now the tall ferns, which cover the soil, begin to move almost imperceptibly, as though their stems were shaken by the slow progress of some crawling body. From time to time, this trifling oscillation suddenly ceases, and all is again motionless. But, after several of these alternations of rustling and deep silence, a human head appears in the midst of the jungle, a little distance from the trunk of the dead tree.

The man to whom it belonged was possessed of a grim countenance, with a complexion the color of greenish bronze, long black hair bound about his temples, eyes brilliant with savage fire, and an expression remarkable for its intelligence and ferocity. Holding his breath, he remained quite still for a moment; then, advancing upon his hands and knees, push-

ing aside the leaves so gently, that not the slightest noise could be heard, he arrived cautiously and slowly at the trunk of the dead tree, the summit of which nearly touched the roof of the ajoupa.

This man, of Malay origin, belonging to the sect of the Lughardars (Stranglers), after having again listened, rose almost entirely from amongst the brushwood. With the exception of white cotton drawers, fastened around his middle by a parti-colored sash, he was completely naked. His bronzed, supple, and nervous limbs were overlaid with a thick coat of oil. Stretching himself along the huge trunk on the side furthest from the cabin, and thus sheltered by the whole breadth of the tree with its surrounding creepers, he began to climb silently, with as much patience as caution. In the undulations of his form, in the flexibility of his movements, in the restrained vigor, which fully put forth would have been alarming, there was some resemblance to the stealthy and treacherous advance of the tiger upon its prey.

Having reached, completely unperceived, the inclined portion of the tree, which almost touched the roof of the cabin, he was only separated from the window by a distance of about a foot. Cautiously advancing his head, he looked down into the interior, to see how he might best find an entrance.

At sight of Djalma in his deep sleep, the Thug's bright eyes glittered with increased brilliancy; a nervous contraction, or rather a mute, ferocious laugh, curling the corners of his mouth, drew them up towards the cheek-bones, and exposed rows of teeth, filed sharp like the points of a saw, and dyed of a shining black.

Djalma was lying in such a manner and so near the door of the ajoupa, which opened inwards, that, were it moved in the least, he must be instantly awakened. The Strangler, with his body still sheltered by the tree, wishing to examine more attentively the interior of the cabin, leaned very forward, and in order to maintain his balance, lightly rested his hand on the ledge of the opening that served for a window. This movement shook the large cactus-flowers, within which the little serpent lay curled, and, darting forth it twisted itself rapidly round the wrist of the Strangler. Whether from pain or surprise, the man uttered a low cry; and as he drew back swiftly, still holding by the trunk of the tree, he perceived that Djalma had moved.

The young Indian, though retaining his supine posture, had half opened his eyes, and turned his head towards the

window, whilst his breast heaved with a deep-drawn sigh, for, beneath that thick dome of moist verdure, the concentrated heat was intolerable.

Hardly had he moved, when, from behind the tree, was heard the shrill, brief, sonorous note, which the bird of paradise utters when it takes its flight—a cry which resembles that of the pheasant. This note was soon repeated, but more faintly, as though the brilliant bird were already at a distance. Djalma, thinking he had discovered the cause of the noise which had aroused him for an instant, stretched out the arm upon which his head had rested, and went to sleep again, with scarcely any change of position.

For some minutes, the most profound silence once more reigned in this solitude, and everything remained motionless.

The Strangler, by his skilful imitation of the bird, had repaired the imprudence of that exclamation of surprise and pain, which the reptile bite had forced from him. When he thought all was safe, he again advanced his head, and saw the young Indian once more plunged in sleep. Then he descended the tree with the same precautions, though his left hand was somewhat swollen from the sting of the serpent, and disappeared in the jungle.

At that instant a song of monotonous and melancholy cadence was heard in the distance. The Strangler raised himself, and listened attentively, and his face took an expression of surprise and deadly anger. The song came nearer and nearer to the cabin, and, in a few seconds, an Indian, passing through an open space in the jungle, approached the spot where the Thug lay concealed.

The latter unwound from his waist a long thin cord, to one of the ends of which was attached a leaden ball, of the form and size of an egg; having fastened the other end of this cord to his right wrist, the Strangler again listened, and then disappeared, crawling through the tall grass in the direction of the Indian, who still advanced slowly, without interrupting his soft and plaintive song.

He was a young fellow scarcely twenty, with a bronzed complexion, the slave of Djalma, his vest of blue cotton was confined at the waist by a parti-colored sash; he wore a red turban, and silver rings in his ears and about his wrists. He was bringing a message to his master, who, during the great heat of the day was reposing in the ajoupa, which stood at some distance from the house he inhabited.

Arriving at a place where two paths separate, the slave,

without hesitation took that which led to the cabin, from which he was now scarce forty paces distant.

One of those enormous Java butterflies, whose wings extend six or eight inches in length, and offer to the eye two streaks of gold on a ground of ultramarine, fluttering from leaf to leaf, alighted on a bush of Cape jasmine, within the reach of the young Indian. The slave stopped in his song, stood still, advanced first a foot, then a hand, and seized the butterfly.

Suddenly he sees a dark figure rise before him; he hears a whizzing noise like that of a sling; he feels a cord thrown with as much rapidity as force, encircle his neck with a triple band; and, almost in the same instant, the leaden ball strikes violently against the back of his head.

This attack was so abrupt and unforeseen, that Djalma's servant could not even utter a single cry, a single groan. He tottered—the Strangler gave a vigorous pull at the cord—the bronzed countenance of the slave became purple, and he fell upon his knees, convulsively moving his arms. Then the Strangler threw him quite down, and pulled the cord so violently, that the blood spurted from the skin. The victim struggled for a moment—and all was over.

During his short but intense agony, the murderer, kneeling before his victim, and watching with ardent eye his least convulsions, seemed plunged into an ecstasy of ferocious joy. His nostrils dilated, the veins of his neck and temples were swollen, and the same savage laugh, which had curled his lips at the aspect of the sleeping Djalma, again displayed his pointed black teeth, which a nervous trembling of the jaws made to chatter. But soon he crossed his arms upon his heaving breast, bowed his forehead, and murmured some mysterious words, which sounded like an invocation or a prayer. Immediately after, he returned to the contemplation of the dead body. The hyena and the tiger-cat, who, before devouring, crouch beside the prey that they have surprised or hunted down, have not a wilder or more sanguinary look than this man.

But, remembering that his task was not yet accomplished tearing himself unwillingly from the hideous spectacle, he unbound the cord from the neck of his victim, fastened it round his own body, dragged the corpse out of the path, and, without attempting to rob it of its silver rings, concealed it in a thick part of the jungle.

Then the Strangler again began to creep on his knees and belly, till he arrived at the cabin of Djalma—that cabin con-

structed of mats suspended from bamboos. After listening attentively, he drew from his girdle a knife, the sharp-pointed blade of which was wrapped in a fig-leaf, and made in the matting an incision of three feet in length. This was done with such quickness, and with so fine a blade, that the light touch of the diamond cutting glass would have made more noise. Seeing, by means of this opening, which was to serve him for a passage, that Djalma was still fast asleep, the Thug, with incredible temerity, glided into the cabin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TATTOOING.

The heavens, which had been till now of transparent blue, became gradually of a greenish tint, and the sun was veiled in red, lurid vapor. This strange light gave to every object a weird appearance, of which one might form an idea, by looking at a landscape through a piece of copper-colored glass. In those climates, this phenomenon, when united with an increase of burning heat, always announces the approach of a storm.

From time to time there was a passing odor of sulphur; then the leaves, slightly shaken by electric currents, would tremble upon their stalks; till again all would return to the former motionless silence. The weight of the burning atmosphere, saturated with sharp perfumes, became almost intolerable. Large drops of sweat stood in pearls on the forehead of Djalma, still plunged in enervating sleep—for it no longer resembled rest, but a painful stupor.

The Strangler glided like a reptile along the sides of the ajoupa, and, crawling on his belly, arrived at the sleeping-mat of Djalma, beside which he squatted himself, so as to occupy as little space as possible. Then began a fearful scene, by reason of the mystery and silence which surrounded it.

Djalma's life was at the mercy of the Strangler. The latter, resting upon his hands and knees, with his neck stretched forward, his eye fixed and dilated, continued motionless as a wild beast about to spring. Only a slight nervous trembling of the jaws agitated that mask of bronze.

But soon his hideous features revealed a violent struggle that was passing within him—a struggle between the thirst,

the craving for the enjoyment of murder, which the recent assassination of the slave had made still more active, and the orders he had received not to attempt the life of Djalma, though the design, which brought him to the ajoupa, might perhaps be as fatal to the young Indian as death itself. Twice did the Strangler, with look of flame, resting only on his left hand, seize with his right the rope's end; and twice his hand fell—the instinct of murder yielding to a powerful will, of which the Malay acknowledged the irresistible empire.

In him, the homicidal craving must have amounted to madness, for, in these hesitations, he lost much precious time: at any moment, Djalma, whose vigor, skill, and courage were known and feared, might awake from his sleep, and, though unarmed, he would prove a terrible adversary. At length the Thug made up his mind; with a suppressed sigh of regret, he set about accomplishing his task.

This task would have appeared impossible to any one else. The reader may judge.

Djalma, with his face turned towards the left, leaned his head upon his curved arm. It was first necessary, without waking him, to oblige him to turn his face towards the right (that is, towards the door), so that, in case of his being half-roused, his first glance might not fall upon the Strangler. The latter, to accomplish his projects, would have to remain many minutes in the cabin.

The heavens became darker; the heat arrived at its last degree of intensity; everything combined to increase the torpor of the sleeper, and so favor the Strangler's designs. Kneeling down close to Djalma, he began, with the tips of his supple, well-oiled fingers, to stroke the brow, temples, and eyelids of the young Indian, but with such extreme lightness, that the contact of the two skins was hardly sensible. When this kind of magnetic incantation had lasted for some seconds, the sweat, which bathed the forehead of Djalma, became more abundant: he heaved a smothered sigh, and the muscles of his face gave several twitches, for the strokings, although too light to rouse him, yet caused in him a feeling of indefinable uneasiness.

Watching him with his restless and burning eye, the Strangler continued his manœuvres with so much patience, that Djalma, still sleeping, but no longer able to bear this vague, annoying sensation, raised his right hand mechanically to his face, as if he would have brushed away an importunate insect. But he had not strength to do it; almost immediately

after, his hand, inert and heavy, fell back upon his chest. The Strangler saw, by this symptom, that he was attaining his object, and continued to stroke, with the same address, the eyelids, brow, and temples.

Whereupon Djalma, more and more oppressed by heavy sleep, and having neither strength nor will to raise his hand to his face, mechanically turned round his head, which fell languidly upon his right shoulder, seeking by this change of attitude, to escape from the disagreeable sensation which pursued him. The first point gained, the Strangler could act more freely.

To render as profound as possible the sleep he had half interrupted, he now strove to imitate the vampire, and, feigning the action of a fan, he rapidly moved his extended hands about the burning face of the young Indian. Alive to a feeling of such sudden and delicious coolness, in the height of suffocating heat, the countenance of Djalma brightened, his bosom heaved, his half-opened lips drank in the grateful air, and he fell into a sleep only the more invincible, because it had been at first disturbed, and was now yielded to under the influence of a pleasing sensation.

A sudden flash of lightning illumined the shady dome that sheltered the ajoupa: fearing that the first clap of thunder might rouse the young Indian, the Strangler hastened to complete his task. Djalma lay on his back, with his head resting on his right shoulder, and his left arm extended; the Thug, crouching at his left side, ceased by degrees the process of fanning; then, with incredible dexterity, he succeeded in rolling up, above the elbow, the long wide sleeve of white muslin that covered the left arm of the sleeper.

He next drew from the pocket of his drawers a copper box, from which he took a very fine, sharp-pointed needle, and a piece of a black looking root. He pricked this root several times with the needle, and on each occasion there issued from it a white, glutinous liquid.

When the Strangler thought the needle sufficiently impregnated with this juice, he bent down, and began to blow gently over the inner surface of Djalma's arm, so as to cause a fresh sensation of coolness; then, with the point of his needle, he traced almost imperceptibly on the skin of the sleeping youth some mysterious and symbolical signs. All this was performed so cleverly, and the point of the needle was so fine and keen, that Djalma did not feel the action of the acid upon the skin.

The signs, which the Strangler had traced, soon appeared on the surface, at first in characters of a pale rose-color, as fine as a hair; but such was the slowly corrosive power of the juice, that, as it worked and spread beneath the skin, they would become in a few hours of a violet red, and as apparent as they were now almost invisible.

The Strangler, having so perfectly succeeded in his project, threw a last look of ferocious longing on the slumbering Indian, and creeping away from the mat, regained the opening by which he had entered the cabin; next, closely uniting the edges of the incision, so as to obviate all suspicion, he disappeared just as the thunder began to rumble hoarsely in the distance.*

* We read in the letters of the late Victor Jacquemont upon India, with regard to the incredible dexterity of these men: "They crawl on the ground, ditches, in the furrows of fields, imitate a hundred different voices, and dissipate the effect of any accidental noise by raising the yelp of the jackal or note of some bird—then are silent, and another imitates the call of the same animal in the distance. They can molest a sleeper by all sorts of noises and slight touches, and make his body and limbs take any position which suits their purpose." Count Edward de Warren, in his excellent work on English India, which we shall have again occasion to quote, expresses himself in the same manner as to the inconceivable address of the Indians: "They have the art," says he, "to rob you, without interrupting your sleep, of the very sheet in which you are enveloped. This is not 'a traveller's tale,' but a fact. The movements of the *bheel* are those of the serpent. If you sleep in your tent, with a servant lying across each entrance, the *bheel* will come and crouch on the outside, in some shady corner, where he can hear the breathing of those within. As soon as the European sleeps, he feels sure of success, for the Asiatic will not long resist the attraction of repose. At the proper moment, he makes a vertical incision in the cloth of the tent, on the spot where he happens to be, and just large enough to admit him. He glides through like a phantom, without making the least grain of sand creak beneath his tread. He is perfectly naked, and all his body is rubbed over with oil; a two edged knife is suspended from his neck. He will squat down close to your couch, and, with incredible coolness and dexterity, will gather up the sheet in very little folds, so as to occupy the least surface possible; then, passing to the other side, he will lightly tickle the sleeper, whom he seems to magnetize, till the latter shrinks back involuntarily, and ends by turning round, and leaving the sheet folded behind him. Should he awake, and strive to seize the robber, he catches at a slippery form, which slides through his hands like an eel; should he even succeed in seizing him, it would be fatal—the dagger strikes him to the heart, he falls bathed in his blood, and the assassin disappears."—E. S.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SMUGGLER.

The tempest of the morning has long been over. The sun is verging towards the horizon. Some hours have elapsed, since the Strangler introduced himself into Djalma's cabin, and tattooed him with a mysterious sign during his sleep.

A horseman advances rapidly down a long avenue of spreading trees. Sheltered by the thick and verdant arch, a thousand birds salute the splendid evening with songs and circlings; red and green parrots climb, by help of their hooked beaks, to the top of pink-blossomed acacias; large Morea birds of the finest and richest blue, whose throats and long tails change in the light to a golden brown, are chasing the *prince-oriels*, clothed in their glossy feathers of black and orange; Kolo doves, of a changeable violet hue, are gently cooing by the side of the birds of paradise, in whose brilliant plumage are mingled the prismatic colors of the emerald and ruby, the topaz and sapphire.

This avenue, a little raised, commanded a view of a small pond, which reflected at intervals the green shade of tamarind trees. In the calm, limpid waters, many fish were visible, some with silver scales and purple fins, others gleaming with azure and vermilion; so still were they that they looked as if set in a mass of bluish crystal, and, as they dwelt motionless near the surface of the pool, on which played a dazzling ray of the sun, they revelled in the enjoyment of the light and heat. A thousand insects—living gems, with wings of flame—glided, fluttered and buzzed over the transparent wave, in which, at an extraordinary depth, were mirrored the variegated tints of the aquatic plants on the bank.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the exuberant nature of this scene, luxuriant in the sunlight, colors, and perfumes, which served, so to speak, as a frame to the young and brilliant rider, who was advancing along the avenue. It was Djalma. He had not yet perceived the indelible marks, which the Strangler had traced upon his left arm.

His Japanese mare, of slender make, full of fire and vigor, is black as night. A narrow red cloth serves instead of saddle. To moderate the impetuous bounds of the animal,

Djalma uses a small steel bit, with headstall and reins of twisted scarlet silk, fine as a thread.

Not one of those admirable riders, sculptured so masterly on the frieze of the Parthenon, sits his horse more gracefully and proudly than this young Indian, whose fine face, illumined by the setting sun, is radiant with serene happiness; his eyes sparkle with joy, and his dilated nostrils and unclosed lips inhale with delight the balmy breeze, that brings to him the perfume of flowers and the scent of fresh leaves, for the trees are still moist from the abundant rain that fell after the storm.

A red cap, similar to that worn by the Greeks, surmounting the black locks of Djalma, sets off to advantage the golden tint of his complexion; his throat is bare; he is clad in his robe of white muslin with large sleeves, confined at the waist by a scarlet sash; very full drawers, in white cotton stuff, leave half uncovered his tawny and polished legs; their classic curve stands out from the dark sides of the horse, which he presses tightly between his muscular calves. He has no stirrups; his foot, small and narrow, is shod with a sandal of morocco leather.

The rush of his thoughts, by turns impetuous and restrained, was expressed in some degree by the pace he imparted to his horse—now bold and precipitate, like the flight of unbridled imagination—now calm and measured, like the reflection which succeeds an idle dream. But, in all this fantastic course, his least movements were distinguished by a proud, independent and somewhat savage grace.

Dispossessed of his paternal territory by the English, and at first detained by them as a state-prisoner after the death of his father—who (as M. Joshua Van Dael had written to M. Rodin) had fallen sword in hand—Djalma had at length been restored to liberty. Abandoning the continent of India, and still accompanied by General Simon, who had lingered hard by the prison of his old friend's son, the young Indian came next to Batavia, the birth-place of his mother, to collect the modest inheritance of his maternal ancestors. And amongst this property, so long despised or forgotten by his father, he found some important papers, and a medal exactly similar to that worn by Rose and Blanche.

General Simon was not more surprised than pleased at this discovery, which not only established a tie of kindred between his wife and Djalma's mother, but which also seemed to promise great advantages for the future. Leaving Djalma at Batavia, to terminate some business there, he

had gone to the neighboring island of Sumatra, in the hope of finding a vessel that would make the passage to Europe directly and rapidly; for it was now necessary that, cost what it might, the young Indian also should be at Paris on the 13th February, 1832. Should General Simon find a vessel ready to sail for Europe, he was to return immediately, to fetch Djalma; and the latter, expecting him daily, was now going to the pier of Batavia, hoping to see the father of Rose and Blanche arrive by the mail-boat from Sumatra.

A few words are here necessary on the early life of the son of Kadja-sing.

Having lost his mother very young, and brought up with rude simplicity, he had accompanied his father, whilst yet a child, to the great tiger hunts, as dangerous as battles; and, in the first dawn of youth, he had followed him to the stern and bloody war, which he waged in defence of his country. Thus living, from the time of his mother's death, in the midst of forests and mountains and continual combats, his vigorous and ingenuous nature had preserved itself pure, and he well merited the name of "The Generous" bestowed on him. Born a prince, he was—which by no means follows—a prince indeed. During the period of his captivity, the silent dignity of his bearing had overawed his jailers. Never a reproach, never a complaint—a proud and melancholy calm was all that he opposed to a treatment as unjust as it was barbarous, until he was restored to freedom.

Having thus been always accustomed to a patriarchal life, or to a war of mountaineers, which he had only quitted to pass a few months in prison, Djalma knew nothing, so to speak, of civilized society. Without its exactly amounting to a defect, he certainly carried his good qualities to their extreme limits. Obstinately faithful to his pledged word, devoted to the death, confiding to blindness, good almost to a complete forgetfulness of himself, he was inflexible towards ingratitude, falsehood, or perfidy. He would have felt no compunction to sacrifice a traitor, because, could he himself have committed a treason, he would have thought it only just to expiate it with his life.

He was, in a word, the man of natural feelings, absolute and entire. Such a man, brought into contact with the temperaments, calculations, falsehoods, deceptions, tricks, restrictions, and hollowness of a refined society, such as Paris, for example, would without doubt form a very curious subject for speculation. We raise this hypothesis, because,

since his journey to France had been determined on, Djalma had one fixed, ardent desire—to be in Paris.

In Paris—that enchanted city—of which, even in Asia, the land of enchantment, so many marvellous tales were told.

What chiefly inflamed the fresh, vivid imagination of the young Indian, was the thought of French women—those attractive Parisian beauties, miracles of elegance and grace, who eclipse, he was informed, even the magnificence of the capitals of the civilized world. And at this very moment, in the brightness of that warm and splendid evening, surrounded by the intoxication of flowers and perfumes, which accelerated the pulses of his young fiery heart, Djalma was dreaming of those exquisite creatures, whom his fancy loved to clothe in the most ideal garbs.

It seemed to him as if, at the end of the avenue, in the midst of that sheet of golden light, which the trees encompassed with their full, green arch, he could see pass and repass, white and sylph-like, a host of adorable and voluptuous phantoms, that threw him kisses from the tips of their rosy fingers. Unable to restrain his burning emotions, carried away by a strange enthusiasm, Djalma uttered exclamations of joy, deep, manly, and sonorous, and made his vigorous courser bound under him in the excitement of a mad delight. Just then a sunbeam, piercing the dark vault of the avenue, shone full upon him.

For several minutes, a man had been advancing rapidly along a path, which, at its termination, intersected the avenue diagonally. He stopped a moment in the shade, looking at Djalma with astonishment. It was indeed a charming sight, to behold, in the midst of a blaze of dazzling lustre, this youth, so handsome, joyous, and ardent, clad in his white and flowing vestments, gayly and lightly seated on his proud black mare, who covered her red bridle with her foam, and whose long tail and thick mane floated on the evening breeze.

But, with that reaction which takes place in all human desires, Djalma soon felt stealing over him a sentiment of soft, undefinable melancholy. He raised his hand to his eyes, now dimmed with moisture, and allowed the reins to fall on the mane of his docile steed, which, instantly stopping, stretched out its long neck, and turned its head in the direction of the personage, whom it could see approaching through the coppice.

This man, Mahal the Smuggler, was dressed nearly like

European sailors. He wore jacket and trousers of white duck, a broad red sash, and a very low-crowned straw hat. His face was brown, with strongly-marked features, and, though forty years of age, he was quite beardless.

In another moment, Mahal was close to the young Indian. "You are Prince Djalma?" said he, in not very good French, raising his hand respectfully to his hat.

"What would you?" said the Indian.

"You are the son of Kadja-sing?"

"Once again, what would you?"

"The friend of General Simon?"

"General Simon?" cried Djalma.

"You are going to meet him, as you have gone every evening, since you expect his return from Sumatra?"

"Yes, but how do you know all this?" said the Indian, looking at the Smuggler with as much surprise as curiosity.

"Is he not to land at Batavia, to-day or to-morrow?"

"Are you sent by him?"

"Perhaps," said Mahal, with a distrustful air. "But are you really the son of Kadja-sing?"

"Yes, I tell you—but where have you seen General Simon?"

"If you are the son of Kadja-sing," resumed Mahal, continuing to regard Djalma with a suspicious eye, "what is your surname?"

"My sire was called the 'Father of the Generous,' answered the young Indian, as a shade of sorrow passed over his fine countenance.

These words appeared in part to convince Mahal of the identity of Djalma; but, wishing doubtless to be still more certain, he resumed: "You must have received, two days ago, a letter from General Simon, written from Sumatra?"

"Yes; but why so many questions?"

"To assure myself that you are really the son of Kadja-sing, and to execute the orders I have received."

"From whom?"

"From General Simon."

"But where is he?"

"When I have proof that you are Prince Djalma, I will tell you. I was informed that you would be mounted on a black mare, with a red bridle. But——"

"By the soul of my mother! speak what you have to say!"

"I will tell you all—if you can tell me what was the printed paper, contained in the last letter that General Simon wrote you from Sumatra."

"It was a cutting from a French newspaper."

"Did it announce good or bad news for the general?"

"Good news—for it related that, during his absence, they had acknowledged the last rank and title bestowed on him by the Emperor, as they had done for others of his brothers in arms, exiled like him."

"You are indeed Prince Djalma," said the Smuggler, after a moment's reflection. "I may speak. General Simon landed last night in Java, but on a desert part of the coast."

"On a desert part?"

"Because he has to hide himself."

"Hide himself!" exclaimed Djalma, in amazement; why?"

"That I don't know."

"But where is he?" asked Djalma, growing pale with alarm.

"He is three leagues hence—near the sea-shore—in the ruins of Tchandi."

"Obliged to hide himself!" repeated Djalma, and his countenance expressed increasing surprise and anxiety.

"Without being certain, I think it is because of a duel he fought in Sumatra," said the Smuggler, mysteriously.

"A duel—with whom?"

"I don't know—I am not at all certain on the subject. But do you know the ruins of Tchandi?"

"Yes."

"The general expects you there; that is what he ordered me to tell you."

"So you came with him from Sumatra?"

"I was pilot of the little smuggling coaster, that landed him in the night on a lonely beach. He knew that you went every day to the mole, to wait for him; I was almost sure that I should meet you. He gave me details about the letter you received from him, as a proof that he had sent me. If he could have found the means of writing, he would have written."

"But he did not tell you *why* he was obliged to hide himself?"

"He told me nothing. Certain words made me suspect what I told you—a duel."

Knowing the mettle of General Simon, Djalma thought the suspicions of the Smuggler not unfounded. After a moment's silence he said to him: "Can you undertake to lead home my horse? My dwelling is without the town—

there, in the midst of those trees—by the side of the new mosque. In ascending the mountain of Tchandi, my horse would be in my way; I shall go much faster on foot."

"I know where you live; General Simon told me. I should have gone there if I had not met you. Give me your horse."

"Djalma sprang lightly to the ground, threw the bridle to Mahal, unrolled one end of his sash, took out a silk purse, and gave it to the Smuggler, saying, "You have been faithful and obedient. Here!—it is a trifle—but I have no more."

"Kadja-sing was rightly called the 'Father of the Generous,'" said the Smuggler, bowing with respect and gratitude. He took the road to Batavia, leading Djalma's horse. The young Indian, on the contrary, plunged into the coppice, and, walking with great strides, he directed his course towards the mountain, on which were the ruins of Tchandi, where he could not arrive before night.

CHAPTER XX.

M. JOSHUA VAN DAEL.

M. Joshua van Dael, a Dutch merchant, and correspondent of M. Rodin, was born at Batavia, the capital of the island of Java; his parents had sent him to be educated at Pondicherry, in a celebrated religious house, long established in that place, and belonging to the "Society of Jesus." It was there that he was initiated into the order as "professor of the three vows," or lay member, commonly called "temporal coadjutor."

Joshua was a man of probity that passed for stainless; of strict accuracy in business, cold, careful, reserved, and remarkably skilful and sagacious; his financial operations were almost always successful, for a protecting power gave him ever in time, knowledge of events which might advantageously influence his commercial transactions. The religious house of Pondicherry was interested in his affairs, having charged him with the exportation and exchange of the produce of its large possessions in this colony.

Speaking little, hearing much, never disputing, polite in the extreme—giving seldom, but with choice and purpose—Joshua, without inspiring sympathy, commanded generally

that cold respect, which is always paid to the rigid moralist; for, instead of yielding to the influence of lax and dissolute colonial manners, he appeared to live with great regularity, and his exterior had something of austerity about it, which tended to overawe.

The following scene took place at Batavia, while Djalma was on his way to the ruins of Tchandi in the hope of meeting General Simon.

M. Joshua had just retired into his cabinet, in which were many shelves filled with paper boxes, and huge ledgers and cash boxes lying open upon desks. The only window of this apartment, which was on the ground floor, looked out upon a narrow empty court, and was protected externally by strong iron bars; instead of glass, it was fitted with a Venetian blind, because of the extreme heat of the climate.

M. Joshua, having placed upon his desk a taper in a glass globe, looked at the clock. "Half-past nine," said he. "Mahal ought soon to be here."

Saying this, he went out, passed through an antechamber, opened a second thick door, studded with nail-heads, in the Dutch fashion, cautiously entered the court (so as not to be heard by the people in the house), and drew back the secret bolt of a gate six feet high, formidably garnished with iron spikes. Leaving this gate unfastened, he regained his cabinet, after he had successively and carefully closed the two other doors behind him.

M. Joshua next seated himself at his desk, and took from a drawer a long letter, or rather statement, commenced some time before, and continued day by day. It is superfluous to observe, that the letter already mentioned, as addressed to M. Rodin, was anterior to the liberation of Djalma and his arrival at Batavia.

The present statement was also addressed to M. Rodin, and Van Dael thus went on with it:

"Fearing the return of General Simon, of which I had been informed by intercepting his letters—I have already told you, that I had succeeded in being employed by him as his agent here; having then read his letters, and sent them on as if untouched to Djalma, I felt myself obliged, from the pressure of the circumstances, to have recourse to extreme measures—taking care always to preserve appearances, and rendering at the same time a signal service to humanity, which last reason chiefly decided me.

"A new danger imperiously commanded these measures. The steamship 'Ruyter' came in yesterday, and sails to-

morrow in the course of the day. She is to make the voyage to Europe *viâ* the Arabian Gulf; her passengers will disembark at Suez, cross the Isthmus, and go on board another vessel at Alexandria, which will bring them to France. This voyage, as rapid as it is direct, will not take more than seven or eight weeks. We are now at the end of October; Prince Djalma might then be in France by the commencement of the month of January; and according to your instructions, of which I know not the motive, but which I execute with zeal and submission, his departure must be prevented at all hazards, because, you tell me, some of the gravest interests of the Society would be compromised, by the arrival of this young Indian in Paris before the 13th of February. Now, if I succeed, as I hope, in making him miss this opportunity of the 'Ruyter' it will be materially impossible for him to arrive in France before the month of April; for the 'Ruyter' is the only vessel which makes the direct passage, the others taking at least four or five months to reach Europe.

"Before telling you the means which I have thought right to employ, to detain Prince Djalma—of the success of which means I am yet uncertain—it is well that you should be acquainted with the following facts.

"They have just discovered, in British India, a community whose members call themselves 'Brothers of the Good Work,' or 'Phansegars,' which signifies simply 'Thugs' or 'Stranglers;' these murderers do not shed blood, but strangle their victims, less for the purpose of robbing them, than in obedience to a homicidal vocation, and to the laws of an infernal divinity named by them 'Bowanee.'

"I cannot better give you an idea of this horrible sect, than by transcribing here some lines from the introduction of a report by Colonel Sleeman, who has hunted out this dark association with indefatigable zeal. The report in question was published about two months ago. Here is the extract; it is the colonel who speaks:

"'From 1822 to 1824, when I was charged with the magistracy and civil administration of the district of Nersingpore, not a murder, not the least robbery was committed by an ordinary criminal, without my being immediately informed of it; but if any one had come and told me at this period, that a band of hereditary assassins by profession lived in the village of Kundelie, within about four hundred yards of my court of justice—that the beautiful groves of the village of Mundesoor, within a day's march of my res-

idence, formed one of the most frightful marts of assassination in all India—that numerous bands of 'Brothers of the Good Work,' coming from Hindostan and the Deccan, met annually beneath these shades, as at a solemn festival, to exercise their dreadful vocation upon all the roads which cross each other in this locality—I should have taken such a person for a madman, or one who had been imposed upon by idle tales. And yet nothing could be truer; hundreds of travellers had been buried every year in the groves of Mundesoor; a whole tribe of assassins lived close to my door, at the very time I was supreme magistrate of the province, and extended their devastations to the cities of Poonah and Hyderabad. I shall never forget, when, to convince me of the fact, one of the chiefs of the Stranglers, who had turned informer against them, caused thirteen bodies to be dug up from the ground beneath my tent, and offered to produce any number from the soil in the immediate vicinity.' *

"These few words of Colonel Sleeman will give some idea of this dread society, which has its laws, duties, customs, opposed to all other laws, human and divine. Devoted to each other, even to heroism, blindly obedient to their chiefs, who profess themselves the immediate representatives of their dark divinity, regarding as enemies all who do not belong to them, gaining recruits everywhere by a frightful system of proselytism—these apostles of a religion of murder go preaching their abominable doctrines in the shade, and spreading their immense net over the whole of India.

"Three of their principal chiefs, and one of their adepts, flying from the determined pursuit of the English governor-general, having succeeded in making their escape, had arrived at the Straits of Malacca, at no great distance from our island; a smuggler, who is also something of a pirate, attached to their association, and by name Mahal, took them on board his coasting vessel, and brought them hither, where they think themselves for some time in safety—as, following the advice of the smuggler, they lie concealed in a thick forest, in which are many ruined temples, and numerous subterranean retreats.

"Amongst these chiefs, all three remarkably intelligent, there is one in particular, named Faringhea, whose extraordinary energy and eminent qualities make him every way redoubtable. He is of the mixed race, half-white and Hindoo, has long inhabited towns in which are European factories,

* This report is extracted from Count Edward de Warren's excellent work, "British India in 1831."—E. S.

and speaks English and French very well. The other two chiefs are a Negro and a Hindoo; the adept is a Malay.

"The smuggler, Mahal, considering that he could obtain a large reward by giving up these three chiefs and their adept, came to me, knowing, as all the world knows, my intimate relations with a person who has great influence with our governor. Two days ago, he offered me, on certain conditions, to deliver up the Negro, the half-caste, the Hindoo, and the Malay. These conditions are—a considerable sum of money, and a free passage on board a vessel sailing for Europe or America, in order to escape the implacable vengeance of the Thugs.

"I joyfully seized the occasion to hand over three such murderers to human justice, and I promised Mahal to arrange matters for him with the governor, but also on certain conditions, innocent in themselves, and which concerned Djalma. Should my project succeed, I will explain myself more at length; I shall soon know the result, for I expect Mahal every minute.

"But before I close these despatches, which are to go tomorrow by the 'Ruyter'—in which vessel I have also engaged a passage for Mahal the Smuggler, in the event of the success of my plans—I must include in parentheses a subject of some importance.

"In my last letter, in which I announced to you the death of Djalma's father, and his own imprisonment by the English, I asked for some information as to the solvency of Baron Tripeaud, banker and manufacturer at Paris, who has also an agency at Calcutta. This information will now be useless, if what I have just learned should, unfortunately, turn out to be correct, and it will be for you to act according to circumstances.

"His house at Calcutta owes considerable sums both to me and our colleague at Pondicherry, and it is said that M. Tripeaud has involved himself to a dangerous extent in attempting to ruin, by opposition, a very flourishing establishment, founded some time ago by M. François Hardy, an eminent manufacturer. I am assured that M. Tripeaud has already sunk and lost a large capital in this enterprise: he has no doubt done a great deal of harm to M. François Hardy; but he has also, they say, seriously compromised his own fortune—and, were he to fail, the effects of his disaster would be very fatal to us, seeing that he owes a large sum of money to me and to us.

"In this state of things it would be very desirable if, by

the employment of the powerful means of every kind at our disposal, we could completely discredit and break down the house of M. François Hardy, already shaken by M. Tripeaud's violent opposition. In that case, the latter would soon regain all he has lost; the ruin of his rival would insure his prosperity, and our demands would be securely covered.

"Doubtless, it is painful, it is sad, to be obliged to have recourse to these extreme measures, only to get back our own; but, in these days, are we not surely justified in sometimes using the arms that are incessantly turned against us? If we are reduced to such steps by the injustice and wickedness of men, we may console ourselves with the reflection that we only seek to preserve our worldly possessions, in order to devote them to the greater glory of God; whilst, in the hands of our enemies, those very goods are the dangerous instruments of perdition and scandal.

"After all, it is merely a humble proposition that I submit to you. Were it in my power to take an active part in the matter, I should do nothing of myself. My will is not my own. It belongs, with all I possess, to those to whom I have sworn absolute obedience."

Here a slight noise interrupted M. Joshua, and drew his attention from his work. He rose abruptly, and went straight to the window. Three gentle taps were given on the outside of one of the slats of the blind.

"Is it you, Mahal?" asked M. Joshua, in a low voice.

"It is I," was answered from without, also in a low tone.

"And the Malay?"

"He has succeeded."

"Really!" cried M. Joshua, with an expression of great satisfaction; "are you sure of it?"

"Quite sure: there is no devil more clever and intrepid."

"And Djalma?"

"The parts of the letter, which I quoted, convinced him that I came from General Simon, and that he would find him at the ruins of Tchandi."

"Therefore, at this moment——"

"Djalma goes to the ruins, where he will encounter the black, the half-blood, and the Indian. It is there they have appointed to meet the Malay, who tattooed the prince during his sleep."

"Have you been to examine the subterraneous passage?"

"I went there yesterday. One of the stones of the pedestal of the statue turns upon itself; the stairs are large; it will do."

"And the three chiefs have no suspicion?"

"None—I saw them in the morning—and this evening the Malay came to tell me all, before he went to join them at the ruins of Tchandi—for he had remained hidden amongst the bushes, not daring to go there in the daytime."

"Mahal—if you have told the truth, and if all succeed—your pardon and ample reward are assured to you. Your berth has been taken on board the 'Ruyter;' you will sail to-morrow; you will thus be safe from the malice of the Stranglers, who would follow you hither to revenge the death of their chiefs, Providence having chosen you to deliver those three great criminals to justice. Heaven will bless you!—Go and wait for me at the door of the governor's house; I will introduce you. The matter is so important that I do not hesitate to disturb him thus late in the night. Go quickly!—I will follow on my side."

The steps of Mahal were distinctly audible, as he withdrew precipitately, and then silence reigned once more in the house. Joshua returned to his desk, and hastily added these words to the despatch, which he had before commenced:

"Whatever may now happen, it will be impossible for Djalma to leave Batavia at present. You may rest quite satisfied; he will not be at Paris by the 13th of next February. As I foresaw, I shall have to be up all night.—I am just going to the governor's. To-morrow I will add a few lines to this long statement, which the steamship 'Ruyter' will convey to Europe."

Having locked up his papers, Joshua rang the bell loudly, and, to the great astonishment of his servants, not accustomed to see him leave home in the middle of the night, went in all haste to the residence of the governor of the island.

We now conduct the reader to the ruins of Tchandi.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RUINS OF TCHANDI.

To the storm in the middle of the day, the approach of which so well served the Strangler's designs upon Djalma, has succeeded a calm and serene night. The disk of the moon rises slowly behind a mass of lofty ruins, situate on a hill, in the midst of a thick wood, about three leagues from Batavia.

Long ranges of stone, high walls of brick, fretted away by time, porticoes covered with parasitical vegetation, stand out boldly from the sheet of silver light which blends the horizon with the limpid blue of the heavens. Some rays of the moon, gliding through the opening on one of these porticoes, fall upon two colossal statues at the foot of an immense staircase, the loose stones of which are almost entirely concealed by grass, moss, and brambles.

The fragments of one of these statues, broken in the middle, lie strewed upon the ground; the other, which remains whole and standing, is frightful to behold. It represents a man of gigantic proportions, with a head three feet high; the expression of the countenance is ferocious, eyes of brilliant slaty black are set beneath gray brows, the large, deep mouth gapes immoderately, and reptiles have made their nest betweeen the lips of stone; by the light of the moon, a hideous swarm is there dimly visible. A broad girdle, adorned with symbolic ornaments, encircles the body of this statue, and fastens a long sword to its right side. The giant has four extended arms, and, in his great hands, he bears an elephant's head, a twisted serpent, a human skull, and a bird resembling a heron. The moon, shedding her light on the profile of this statue, serves to augment the weirdness of its aspect.

Here and there, enclosed in the half-crumbling walls of brick, are fragments of stone bas-reliefs, very boldly cut; one of those in the best preservation represents a man with the head of an elephant, and the wings of a bat, devouring a child. Nothing can be more gloomy than these ruins, buried among thick trees of a dark green, covered with frightful emblems, and seen by the moonlight, in the midst of the deep silence of night.

Against one of the walls of this ancient temple, dedicated to some mysterious and bloody Javanese divinity, leans a kind of hut, rudely constructed of fragments of brick and stone; the door, made of woven rushes, is open, and a red light streams from it, which throws its rays on the tall grass that covers the ground. Three men are assembled in this hovel, around a clay-lamp, with a wick of cocoanut fibre steeped in palm-oil.

The first of these three, about forty years of age, is poorly clad in the European fashion; his pale, almost white, complexion, announces that he belongs to the mixed race, being offspring of a white father and Indian mother.

The second is a robust African negro, with thick lips,

vigorous shoulders, and lank legs; his woolly hair is beginning to turn gray; he is covered with rags, and stands close beside the Indian. The third personage is asleep, and stretched on a mat in the corner of the hovel.

These three men are the three Thuggee chiefs, who, obliged to fly from the continent of India, have taken refuge in Java, under the guidance of Mahal the Smuggler.

"The Malay does not return," said the half-blood, named Faringhea, the most redoubtable chief of this homicidal sect: "in executing our orders, he has perhaps been killed by Djalma."

"The storm of this morning brought every reptile out of the earth," said the negro; "the Malay must have been bitten, and his body ere now a nest of serpents."

"To serve the good work," proceeded Faringhea, with a gloomy air, "one must know how to brave death."

"And to inflict it," added the negro.

A stifled cry, followed by some inarticulate words, here drew the attention of these two men, who hastily turned their heads in the direction of the sleeper. This latter was thirty years old at most. His beardless face, of a bright copper color, his robe of coarse stuff, his turban striped brown and yellow, showed that he belonged to the pure Hindoo race. His sleep appeared agitated by some painful vision; an abundant sweat streamed over his countenance, contracted by terror; he spoke in his dream, but his words were brief and broken, and accompanied with convulsive starts.

"Again that dream!" said Faringhea to the negro. "Always the remembrance of that man."

"What man?"

"Do you not remember, how, five years ago, that savage, Colonel Kennedy, butcher of the Indians, came to the banks of the Ganges, to hunt the tiger, with twenty horses; four elephants, and fifty servants?"

"Yes, yes," said the negro; "and we three, hunters of men, made a better day's sport than he did. Kennedy, his horses, his elephants, and his numerous servants did not get their tiger—but we got ours," he added, with grim irony. "Yes; Kennedy, that tiger with a human face, fell into our ambush, and the brothers of the good work offered up their fine prey to our goddess Bowanee."

"If you remember, it was just at the moment when we gave the last tug to the cord round Kennedy's neck, that we perceived on a sudden a traveller close at hand. He had seen

us, and it was necessary to make away with him. Now, since that time," added Faringhea, "the remembrance of the murder of that man pursues our brother in his dreams," and he pointed to the sleeping Indian.

"And even when he is awake," said the negro, looking at Faringhea with a significant air.

"Listen!" said the other, again pointing to the Indian, who, in the agitation of his dream, recommenced talking in abrupt sentences; "listen! he is repeating the answers of the traveller, when we told him he must die, or serve with us on Thuggee. His mind is still impressed—deeply impressed—with those words."

And, in fact, the Indian repeated aloud in his sleep, a sort of mysterious dialogue, of which he himself supplied both questions and answers.

"'Traveller,' said he, in a voice broken by sudden pauses, "'why that black mark on your forehead, stretching from one temple to the other? It is a mark of doom and your look is sad as death. Have you been a victim? Come with us; Kallee will avenge you. You have suffered?'—'Yes, I have greatly suffered.'—'For a long time?'—'Yes, for a very long time.'—'You suffer even now?'—'Yes, even now.'—'What do you reserve for those who injure you?'—My pity.'—'Will you not render blow for blow?'—'I will return love for hate.'—'Who are you, then, that render good for evil?'—'I am one who loves, and suffers, and forgives.'"

"Brother, do you hear?" said the negro to Faringhea; "he has not forgotten the words of the traveller before his death."

"The vision follows him. Listen! he will speak again. How pale he is!" Still under the influence of his dream, the Indian continued:

"'Traveller, we are three; we are brave; we have your life in our hands—you have seen us sacrifice to the good work. Be one of us, or die—die—die! Oh, that look! Not thus—do not look at me thus!'" As he uttered these last words, the Indian made a sudden movement, as if to keep off some approaching object, and awoke with a start. Then, passing his hand over his moist forehead, he looked round him with a bewildered eye.

"What! again this dream, brother?" said Faringhea. "For a bold hunter of men, you have a weak head. Luckily, you have a strong heart and arm."

The other remained a moment silent, his face buried in

his hands; then he replied: "It is long since I last dreamed of that traveller."

"Is he not dead?" said Faringhea, shrugging his shoulders. "Did you not yourself throw the cord around his neck?"

"Yes," replied the Indian shuddering.

"Did we not dig his grave by the side of Colonel Kennedy's? Did we not bury him with the English butcher, under the sand and the rushes?" said the negro.

"Yes, we dug his grave," said the Indian, trembling; "and yet, only a year ago, I was seated one evening at the gate of Bombay, waiting for one of our brothers—the sun was setting behind the pagoda, to the right of the little hill—the scene is all before me now—I was seated under a fig-tree—when I heard a slow, firm, even step, and, as I turned round my head—I saw him—coming out of the town."

"A vision," said the negro; "always the same vision!"

"A vision," added Faringhea, "or a vague resemblance."

"I knew him by the black mark on his forehead; it was none but he. I remained motionless with fear, gazing at him with eyes aghast. He stopped, bending upon me his calm, sad look. In spite of myself, I could not help exclaiming: 'It is he!'—'Yes,' he replied, in his gentle voice, 'it is I. Since all whom thou killest must needs live again,' and he pointed to heaven as he spoke, 'why shouldst thou kill?—Hear me! I have just come from Java; I am going to the other end of the world, to a country of never-melting snow; but, here or there, on plains of fire or plains of ice, I shall still be the same. Even so is it with the souls of those who fall beneath thy *kallaepra*; in this world or up above, in this garb or in another, the soul must still be a soul; thou canst not smite it. Why then kill?'—and shaking his head sorrowfully, he went on his way, walking slowly, with downcast eyes; he ascended the hill of the pagoda; I watched him as he went, without being able to move: at the moment the sun set, he was standing on the summit of the hill, his tall figure thrown out against the sky—and so he disappeared. Oh! it was he!" added the Indian with a shudder, after a long pause: "it was none but he."

In this story the Indian had never varied, though he had often entertained his companions with the same mysterious adventure. This persistency on his part had the effect of shaking their incredulity, or at least of inducing them to seek some natural cause for this apparently superhuman event.

"Perhaps," said Faringhea, after a moment's reflection, "the knot round the traveller's neck got jammed, and some breath was left him, the air may have penetrated the rushes with which we covered his grave, and so life have returned to him."

"No, no," said the Indian, shaking his head, "this man is not of our race."

"Explain."

"Now I know it!"

"What do you know?"

"Listen!" said the Indian, in a solemn voice; "the number of victims that the children of Bowanee have sacrificed since the commencement of ages, is nothing compared to the immense heap of dead and dying, whom this terrible traveller leaves behind him in his murderous march."

"He?" cried the negro and Faringhea.

"Yes, *he!*" repeated the Hindoo, with a convinced accent, that made its impression upon his companions. "Hear me and tremble!—When I met this traveller at the gates of Bombay, he came from Java, and was going towards the north, he said. The very next day, the town was a prey to the cholera, and we learned some time after, that this plague had first broken out here, in Java."

"That is true," said the negro.

"Hear me still further!" resumed the other. "'I am going towards the north, to a country of eternal snow,' said the traveller to me. The cholera also went towards the north, passing through Muscat—Ispahan—Tauris—Tiflis—till it overwhelmed Siberia."

"True," said Faringhea, becoming thoughtful.

"And the cholera," resumed the Indian, "only travelled its five or six leagues a day—a man's tramp—never appeared in two places at once—but swept on slowly, steadily,—even as a man proceeds."

At the mention of this strange coincidence, the Hindoo's companions looked at each other in amazement. After a silence of some minutes, the awe-struck negro said to the last speaker: "So you think that this man——"

"I think that this man, whom we killed, restored to life by some infernal divinity, has been commissioned to bear this terrible scourge over the earth, and to scatter round his steps that death, from which he is himself secure. Remember!" added the Indian, with gloomy enthusiasm, "this awful wayfarer passed through Java—the cholera wasted Java. He passed through Bombay—the cholera wasted

Bombay. He went towards the north—the cholera wasted the north."

So saying, the Indian fell into a profound reverie. The negro and Faringhea were seized with gloomy astonishment.

The Indian spoke the truth as to the mysterious march (still unexplained) of that fearful malady, which has never been known to travel more than five or six leagues a day, or to appear simultaneously in two spots. Nothing can be more curious, than to trace out, on the maps prepared at the period in question, the slow, progressive course of this travelling pestilence, which offers to the astonished eye all the capricious incidents of a tourist's journey. Passing this way rather than that—selecting provinces in a country—towns in a province—one quarter in a town—one street in a quarter—one house in a street—having its place of residence and repose, and then continuing its slow, mysterious, fear-inspiring march.

The words of the Hindoo, by drawing attention to these dreadful eccentricities, made a strong impression upon the minds of the negro and Faringhea—wild natures, brought by horrible doctrines to the monomania of murder.

Yes—for this also is an established fact—there have been in India members of an abominable community, who killed without motive, without passion—killed for the sake of killing—for the pleasure of murder—to substitute death for life—to make of a living man a corpse, as they have themselves declared in one of their examinations.

The mind loses itself in the attempt to penetrate the causes of these monstrous phenomena. By what incredible series of events, have men been induced to devote themselves to this priesthood of destruction? Without doubt, such a religion could only flourish in countries given up, like India, to the most atrocious slavery, and to the most merciless iniquity of man to man.

Such a creed!—is it not the hate of exasperated humanity, wound up to its highest pitch by oppression?—May not this homicidal sect, whose origin is lost in the night of ages, have been perpetuated in these regions, as the only possible protest of slavery against despotism? May not an inscrutable wisdom have here made Phansegars, even as are made tigers and serpents?

What is most remarkable in this awful sect, is the mysterious bond, which, uniting its members amongst themselves, separates them from all other men. They have laws

and customs of their own, they support and help each other, but for them there is neither country nor family; they owe no allegiance save to a dark, invisible power, whose decrees they obey with blind submission, and in whose name they spread themselves abroad, to make corpses, according to their own savage expression.*

* The following are some passages from the Count de Warren's very curious book, "British India in 1831:" "Besides the robbers, who kill for the sake of the booty they hope to find upon travellers, there is a class of assassins, forming an organized society, with chiefs of their own, a slang-language, a science, a free-masonry, and even a religion, which has its fanaticism and its devotion, its agents, emissaries, allies, its militant forces, and its passive adherents, who contribute their money to the *good work*. This is the community of the Thugs or Phansegars (deceivers or stranglers, from *thugna*, to deceive, and *phansna*, to strangle), a religious and economical society, which speculates with the human race by exterminating men; its origin is lost in the night of ages.

"Until 1810 their existence was unknown, not only to the European conquerors, but even to the native governments. Between the years 1816 and 1830, several of their bands were taken in the act, and punished; but until this last epoch, all the revelations made on the subject by officers of great experience, had appeared too monstrous to obtain the attention or belief of the public; they had been rejected and despised as the dreams of a heated imagination. And yet for many years, at the very least for half a century, this social wound had been frightfully on the increase, devouring the population from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and from Cutch to Assam.

"It was in the year 1830 that the revelations of a celebrated chief, whose life was spared on condition of his denouncing his accomplices, laid bare the whole system. The basis of the Thuggee Society is a religious belief—the worship of Bowance, a gloomy divinity, who is only pleased with carnage, and detests above all things the human race. Her most agreeable sacrifices are human victims, and the more of these her disciple may have offered up in this world, the more he will be recompensed in the next by all the delights of soul and sense, by women always beautiful, and joys eternally renewed. If the assassin meets the scaffold in his career, he dies with the enthusiasm of a martyr, because he expects his reward. To obey his divine mistress, he murders, without anger and without remorse, the old man, woman and child; whilst, to his fellow-religionists, he may be charitable, humane, generous, devoted, and may share all in common with them, because, like himself, they are the ministers and adopted children of Bowance. The destruction of his fellow-creatures, not belonging to his community—the diminution of the human race—that is the primary object of his pursuit; it is not as a means of gain, for though plunder may be a frequent, and doubtless an agreeable accessory, it is only secondary in his estimation. Destruction is his end, his celestial mission, his calling; it is also a delicious passion, the most captivating of all sports—this hunting of men!—'You find great pleasure,' said one of those that were condemned, 'in tracking the wild beast to his den, in attacking the boar, the tiger, because there is danger to brave, energy and courage to display. Think how this attraction must be redoubled, when the contest is with man, when it is man that is to be destroyed. Instead of the single faculty of courage, all must be called into action—courage, cunning, foresight, eloquence, in-

For some moments the three Stranglers had maintained a profound silence.

Outside the hut, the moon continued to throw great masses of white radiance, and tall bluish shadows, over the imposing fabric of the ruins; the stars sparkled in the heavens; from time to time, a faint breeze rustled through the thick and varnished leaves of the bananas and the palms.

The pedestal of the gigantic statue, which, still entire, stood on the left side of the portico, rested upon large flagstones, half hidden with brambles. Suddenly, one of these stones appeared to fall in; and from the aperture, which thus formed itself without noise, a man, dressed in uniform, half protruded his body, looked carefully around him, and listened.

Seeing the rays of the lamp, which lighted the interior of the hovel, tremble upon the tall grass, he turned round to make a signal, and soon, accompanied by two other soldiers, he ascended, with the greatest silence and precaution, the last steps of the subterranean staircase, and went gliding amongst the ruins. For a few moments, their moving shadows were thrown upon the moonlit ground; then they disappeared behind some fragments of broken wall.

At the instant when the large stone resumed its place and level, the heads of many other soldiers might have been seen lying close in the excavation. The half-caste, the Indian, and the negro, still seated thoughtfully in the hut, did not perceive what was passing.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE AMBUSCADE.

The half-blood Faringhea, wishing doubtless to escape from the dark thoughts which the words of the Indian on the mysterious course of the Cholera had raised within him, abruptly changed the subject of conversation. His eye

trigue. What springs to put in motion! what plans to develop! To sport with all the passions, to touch the chords of love and friendship, and so draw the prey into one's net—that is a glorious chase—it is a delight, a rapture, I tell you!'

"Whoever was in India in the years 1831 and 1832, must remember the stupor and affright, which the discovery of this vast infernal machine spread through all classes of society. A great number of magistrates and administrators of provinces refused to believe in it, and could not be brought to comprehend that such a system had so long preyed on the body politic, under their eyes as it were, silently, and without betraying itself."—See "British India in 1831," by Count Edward de Warren, 2 vols. in 8vo. Paris, 1844.—E. S.

shone with lurid fire, and his countenance took an expression of savage enthusiasm, as he cried: "Bowance will always watch over us, intrepid hunters of men! Courage, brothers, courage! The world is large; our prey is everywhere. The English may force us to quit India, three chiefs of the good work—but what matter? We leave there our brethren, secret, numerous, and terrible, as black scorpions, whose presence is only known by their mortal sting. Exiles will widen our domains. Brother, you shall have America!" said he to the Hindoo, with an inspired air. "Brother, you shall have Africa?" said he to the negro. "Brothers, I will take Europe! Wherever men are to be found, there must be oppressors and victims—wherever there are victims, there must be hearts swollen with hate—it is for us to inflame that hate with all the ardor of vengeance! It is for us, servants of Bowanee, to draw towards us, by seducing wiles, all whose zeal, courage, and audacity may be useful to the cause. Let us rival each other in devotion and sacrifices; let us lend each other strength, help, support! That all who are not with us may be our prey, let us stand alone in the midst of all, against all, and in spite of all. For us, there must be neither country nor family. Our family is composed of our brethren; our country is the world."

This kind of savage eloquence made a deep impression on the negro and the Indian, over whom Faringhea generally exercised considerable influence, his intellectual powers being very superior to theirs, though they were themselves two of the most eminent chiefs of this bloody association. "Yes, you are right, brother!" cried the Indian, sharing the enthusiasm of Faringhea; "the world is ours. Even here, in Java, let us leave some trace of our passage. Before we depart, let us establish the good work in this island; it will increase quickly, for here also is great misery, and the Dutch are rapacious as the English. Brother, I have seen in the marshy rice-fields of this island, always fatal to those who cultivate them, men whom absolute want forced to the deadly task—they were livid as corpses—some of them worn out with sickness, fatigue, and hunger, fell—never to rise again. Brothers, the good work will prosper in this country!"

"The other evening," said the half-caste, "I was on the banks of the lake, behind a rock; a young woman came there—a few rags hardly covered her lean and sun-scorched body—in her arms she held a little child, which she pressed weeping to her milkless breast. She kissed it three times,

and said to it: 'You, at least, shall not be so unhappy as your father'—and she threw it into the lake. It uttered one wail, and disappeared. On this cry, the alligators, hidden amongst the reeds, leaped joyfully into the water. There are mothers here who kill their children out of pity. —Brothers, the good work will prosper in this country!"

"This morning," said the negro, "whilst they tore the flesh of one of his black slaves with whips, a withered old merchant of Batavia left his country-house to come to the town. Lolling in his palanquin, he received, with languid indolence, the sad caresses of two of those girls, whom he had bought, to people his harem, from parents too poor to give them food. The palanquin, which held this little old man, and the girls, was carried by twelve young and robust men. There are here, you see, mothers who in their misery sell their own daughters—slaves that are scourged—men that carry other men, like beasts of burden.—Brothers, the good work will prosper in this country!"

"Yes, in this country—and in every land of oppression, distress, corruption, and slavery."

"Could we but induce Djalma to join us, as Mahal the Smuggler advised," said the Indian, "our voyage to Java would doubly profit us; for we should then number among our band this brave and enterprising youth, who has so many motives to hate mankind."

"He will soon be here; let us envenom his resentments."

"Remind him of his father's death!"

"Of the massacre of his people!"

"His own captivity!"

"Only let hatred inflame his heart, and he will be ours."

The negro, who had remained for some time lost in thought, said suddenly: "Brothers, suppose Mahal the Smuggler were to betray us?"

"He?" cried the Hindoo, almost with indignation; "he gave us an asylum on board his bark; he secured our flight from the Continent; he is again to take us with him to Bombay, where we shall find vessels for America, Europe, Africa."

"What interest would Mahal have to betray us?" said Faringhea. "Nothing could save him from the vengeance of the sons of Bowanee, and that he knows."

"Well," said the black, "he promised to get Djalma to come hither this evening, and, once amongst us, he must needs be our own."

"Was it not the Smuggler who told us to order the Malay

to enter the ajoupa of Djalma, to surprise him during his sleep, and, instead of killing him as he might have done, to trace the name of Bowanee upon his arm? Djalma will thus learn to judge of the resolution, the cunning and obedience of our brethren, and he will understand what he has to hope or fear from such men. Be it through admiration or through terror, he must become one of us."

"But if he refuses to join us, notwithstanding the reasons he has to hate mankind?"

"Then—Bowanee will decide his fate," said Faringhea, with a gloomy look; "I have my plan."

"But will the Malay succeed in surprising Djalma during his sleep?" said the negro.

"There is none nobler, more agile, more dexterous, than the Malay," said Faringhea. "He once had the daring to surprise in her den a black panther, as she suckled her cub. He killed the dam, and took away the young one, which he afterwards sold to some European ship's captain."

"The Malay has succeeded!" exclaimed the Indian, listening to a singular kind of hoot, which sounded through the profound silence of the night and of the woods.

"Yes, it is the scream of the vulture seizing its prey," said the negro, listening in his turn; "it is also the signal of our brethren, after they have seized their prey."

In a few minutes, the Malay appeared at the door of the hut. He had wound around him a broad length of cotton, adorned with bright colored stripes.

"Well," said the negro, anxiously; "have you succeeded?"

"Djalma must bear all his life the mark of the good work," said the Malay, proudly. "To reach him, I was forced to offer up to Bowanee a man who crossed my path—I have left his body under the brambles, near the ajoupa. But Djalma is marked with the sign. Mahal the Smuggler was the first to know it."

"And Djalma did not awake?" said the Indian, confounded by the Malay's adroitness.

"Had he awoke," replied the other, calmly, "I should have been a dead man—as I was charged to spare his life."

"Because his life may be more useful to us than his death," said the half-caste. Then, addressing the Malay, he added: "Brother, in risking life for the good work, you have done to-day what we did yesterday, what we may do again to-morrow. This time, you obey; another you will command."

"We all belong to Bowanee," answered the Malay.

"What is there yet to do?—I am ready." Whilst he thus spoke, his face was turned towards the door of the hut; on a sudden, he said in a low voice: "Here is Djalma. He approaches the cabin. Mahal has not deceived us."

"He must not see me yet," said Faringhea, retiring to an obscure corner of the cabin, and hiding himself under a mat; "try to persuade him. If he resists—I have my project."

Hardly had Faringhea disappeared, saying these words, when Djalma arrived at the door of the hovel. At sight of those three personages with their forbidding aspect, Djalma started in surprise. But ignorant that these men belonged to the Phansegars, and knowing that, in a country where there are no inns, travellers often pass the night under a tent, or beneath the shelter of some ruins, he continued to advance towards them. After the first moment, he perceived by the complexion and the dress of one of these men, that he was an Indian, and he accosted him in the Hindoo language: "I thought to have found here a European—a Frenchman——"

"The Frenchman is not yet come," replied the Indian; "but he will not be long."

Guessing by Djalma's question the means which Mahal had employed to draw him into the snare, the Indian hoped to gain time by prolonging his error.

"You knew this Frenchman?" asked Djalma of the Phansegar.

"He appointed us to meet him here, as he did you," answered the Indian.

"For what?" inquired Djalma, more and more astonished.

"You will know when he arrives."

"General Simon told you to be at this place?"

"Yes, General Simon," replied the Indian.

There was a moment's pause, during which Djalma sought in vain to explain to himself this mysterious adventure. "And who are you?" asked he, with a look of suspicion; for the gloomy silence of the Phansegar's two companions, who stared fixedly at each other, began to give him some uneasiness.

"We are yours, if you will be ours," answered the Indian.

"I have no need of you—nor you of me."

"Who knows?"

"I know it."

"You are deceived. The English killed your father, a king; made you a captive; proscribed you, you have lost all your possessions."

At this cruel reminder, the countenance of Djalma darkened. He started, and a bitter smile curled his lip. The Phansegar continued:

"Your father was just and brave—beloved by his subjects—they called him 'Father of the Generous,' and he was well named. Will you leave his death unavenged? Will the hate, which gnaws at your heart, be without fruit?"

"My father died with arms in his hand. I revenged his death on the English whom I killed in war. He, who has since been a father to me, and who fought also in the same cause, told me, that it would now be madness to attempt to recover my territory from the English. When they gave me my liberty, I swore never again to set foot in India—and I keep the oaths I make."

"Those who despoiled you, who took you captive, who killed your father—were men. Are there not other men, on whom you can avenge yourself! Let your hate fall upon them!"

"You, who speak thus of men, are not a man!"

"I, and those who resemble me, are more than men. We are, to the rest of the human race, what the bold hunter is to the wild beasts, which they run down in the forest. Will you be, like us, more than a man? Will you glut surely, largely, safely—the hate which devours your heart, for all the evil done you?"

"Your words become more and more obscure: I have no hatred in my heart," said Djalma. "When an enemy is worthy of me, I fight with him; when he is unworthy, I despise him. So that I have no hate—either for brave men or cowards."

"Treachery!" cried the negro on a sudden, pointing with rapid gesture to the door, for Djalma and the Indian had now withdrawn a little from it, and were standing in one corner of the hovel.

At the shout of the negro, Faringhea, who had not been perceived by Djalma, threw off abruptly the mat which covered him, drew his crease, started up like a tiger, and with one bound was out of the cabin. Then, seeing a body of soldiers advancing cautiously in a circle, he dealt one of them a mortal stroke, threw down two others, and disappeared in the midst of the ruins. All this passed so instantaneously, that, when Djalma turned round, to ascertain the cause of the negro's cry of alarm, Faringhea had already disappeared.

The muskets of several soldiers, crowding to the door,

were immediately pointed at Djalma and the three Stranglers, whilst others went in pursuit of Faringhea. The negro, the Malay, and the Indian, seeing the impossibility of resistance, exchanged a few rapid words, and offered their hands to the cords, with which some of the soldiers had provided themselves.

The Dutch captain, who commanded the squad, entered the cabin at this moment. "And this other one?" said he, pointing out Djalma to the soldiers, who were occupied in binding the three Phansegars.

"Each in his turn, captain!" said an old sergeant. "We come to him next."

Djalma had remained petrified with surprise, not understanding what was passing round him; but, when he saw the sergeant and two soldiers approach with ropes to bind him, he repulsed them with violent indignation, and rushed towards the door where stood the officer. The soldiers, who had supposed that Djalma would submit to his fate with the same impassibility as his companions, were astounded by this resistance, and recoiled some paces, being struck in spite of themselves, with the noble and dignified air of the son of Kadja-sing.

"Why would you bind me like these men?" cried Djalma, addressing himself in Hindostanee to the officer, who understood that language from his long service in the Dutch colonies.

"Why would we bind you, wretch?—because you form part of this band of assassins. What?" added the officer in Dutch, speaking to the soldiers, "are you afraid of him—Tie the cord tight about his wrists; there will soon be another about his neck."

"You are mistaken," said Djalma, with a dignity and calmness which astonished the officer; "I have hardly been in this place a quarter of an hour—I do not know these men. I came here to meet a Frenchman."

"Not a Phansegar like them?—Who will believe the falsehood?"

"Them!" cried Djalma, with so natural a movement and expression of horror, that with a sign the officer stopped the soldiers, who were again advancing to bind the son of Kadja-sing; "these men form part of that horrible band of murderers! and you accuse me of being their accomplice!—Oh, in this case, sir! I am perfectly at ease," said the young man, with a smile of disdain.

"It will not be sufficient to say that you are tranquil,"

replied the officer; "thanks to their confessions, we now know by what mysterious signs to recognize the Thugs."

"I repeat, sir, that I hold these murderers in the greatest horror, and that I came here——"

The negro, interrupting Djalma, said to the officer with a ferocious joy: "You have hit it; the sons of the good work do know each other by marks tattooed on their skin. For us, the hour is come—we give our necks to the cord. Often enough have we twined it round the necks of those who served not with us the good work. Now, look at our arms, and look at the arms of this youth!"

The officer, misinterpreting the words of the negro, said to Djalma: "It is quite clear, that if, as this negro tells us, you do not bear on your arm the mysterious symbol—(we are going to assure ourselves of the fact), and if you can explain your presence here in a satisfactory manner, you may be at liberty within two hours."

"You do not understand me," said the negro to the officer; "Prince Djalma is one of us, for he bears on his left arm the name of Bowanee."

"Yes! he is like us, a son of Kalle!" added the Malay.

"He is like us, a Phansegar," said the Indian.

The three men, irritated at the horror which Djalma had manifested on learning that they were Phansegars, took a savage pride in making it believed that the son of Kadjasing belonged to their frightful association.

"What have you to answer?" said the officer to Djalma. The latter again gave a look of disdainful pity, raised with his right hand his long, wide left sleeve, and displayed his naked arm.

"What audacity!" cried the officer, for on the inner part of the fore-arm, a little below the bend, the name of the Bowanee, in bright red Hindoo characters, was distinctly visible. The officer ran to the Malay, and uncovered his arm; he saw the same word, the same signs. Not yet satisfied, he assured himself that the negro and the Indian were likewise so marked.

"Wretch!" cried he, turning furiously towards Djalma; "you inspire even more horror than your accomplices. Bind him like a cowardly assassin," added he to the soldiers; "like a cowardly assassin, who lies upon the brink of the grave, for his execution will not be long delayed."

Struck with stupor, Djalma, who for some moments had kept his eye riveted on the fatal mark, was unable to pronounce a word, or make the least movement: his powers of

thought seemed to fail him, in presence of this incomprehensible fact.

"Would you dare deny this sign?" said the officer to him, with indignation.

"I cannot deny what I see—what is," said Djalma, quite overcome.

"It is lucky that you confess at last," replied the officer. "Soldiers, keep watch over him and his accomplices—you answer for them."

Almost believing himself the sport of some wild dream, Djalma offered no resistance, but allowed himself to be bound and removed with mechanical passiveness. The officer, with part of his soldiers, hoped still to discover Faringhea amongst the ruins; but his search was vain, and, after spending an hour in fruitless endeavors, he set out for Batavia, where the escort of the prisoners had arrived before him.

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Some hours after these events, M. Joshua van Dael thus finished his long despatch, addressed to M. Rodin, of Paris:

"Circumstances were such, that I could not act otherwise; and, taking all into consideration, it is a very small evil for a great good. Three murderers are delivered over to justice, and the temporary arrest of Djalma will only serve to make his innocence shine forth with redoubled lustre.

"Already this morning I went to the governor, to protest in favor of our young prince. 'As it was through me,' I said, 'that those three great criminals fell into the hands of the authorities, let them at least show me some gratitude, by doing everything to render clear as day the innocence of Prince Djalma, so interesting by reason of his misfortunes and noble qualities. Most certainly,' I added, 'when I came yesterday to inform the governor, that the Phansegars would be found assembled in the ruins of Tchandi, I was far from anticipating that any one would confound with those wretches the adopted son of General Simon, an excellent man, with whom I have had for some time the most honorable relations. We must, then, at any cost, discover the inconceivable mystery that has placed Djalma in this dangerous position; and,' I continued, 'so convinced am I of his innocence, that, for his own sake, I would not ask for any favor on his behalf. He will have sufficient courage and dignity to wait patiently in prison for the day of justice.' In all this, you see, I spoke nothing but the truth,

and had not to reproach myself with the least deception, for nobody in the world is more convinced than I am of Djalma's innocence.

"The governor answered me as I expected, that morally he felt as certain as I did of the innocence of the young prince, and would treat him with all possible consideration; but that it was necessary for justice to have its course, because it would be the only way of demonstrating the falsehood of the accusation, and discovering by what unaccountable fatality that mysterious sign was tattooed upon Djalma's arm.

"Mahal the Smuggler, who alone could enlighten justice on this subject, will in another hour have quitted Batavia, to go on board the 'Ruyter,' which will take him to Egypt; for he has a note from me to the captain, to certify that he is the person for whom I engaged and paid the passage. At the same time, he will be the bearer of this long despatch, for the 'Ruyter' is to sail in an hour, and the last letter-bag for Europe was made up yesterday evening. But I wished to see the governor this morning, before closing the present.

"Thus, then, is Prince Djalma enforcedly detained for a month, and, this opportunity of the 'Ruyter' once lost, it is materially impossible that the young Indian can be in France by the 13th of next February. You see, therefore, that, even as you ordered, so have I acted according to the means at my disposal—considering only the end which justifies them—for you tell me a great interest of the society is concerned.

"In your hands, I have been what we all ought to be in the hands of our superiors—a mere instrument: since, for the greater glory of God, we become corpses with regard to the will.* Men may deny our unity and power, and the times appear opposed to us; but circumstances only change; we are ever the same.

"Obedience and courage, secrecy and patience, craft and audacity, union and devotion—these become us, who have the world for our country, our brethren for family, Rome for our Queen! "J. V."

* * * * * * *

* It is known that the doctrine of passive and absolute obedience, the main-spring of the Society of Jesus, is summed up in those terrible words of the dying Loyola: "Every member of the Order shall be, in the hands of his superiors, even as a corpse (*Perinde ac Cadaver*)."—E. S.

About ten o'clock in the morning, Mahal the Smuggler set out with this despatch (sealed) in his possession, to board the "Ruyter." An hour later, the dead body of this same Mahal, strangled by Thuggee, lay concealed beneath some reeds on the edge of a desert strand, whither he had gone to take boat to join the vessel.

When at a subsequent period, after the departure of the steamship, they found the corpse of the smuggler, M. Joshua sought in vain for the voluminous packet, which he had entrusted to his care. Neither was there any trace of the note which Mahal was to have delivered to the captain of the "Ruyter," in order to be received as passenger.

Finally, the searches and bushwhacking ordered throughout the country for the purpose of discovering Faringhea, were of no avail. The dangerous chief of the Stranglers was never seen again in Java.

CHAPTER XXIII.

M. RODIN.

Three months have elapsed since Djalma was thrown into Batavia Prison accused of belonging to the murderous gang of Megpunnas. The following scene takes place in France, at the commencement of the month of February, 1832, in Cardoville Manor House, an old feudal habitation standing upon the tall cliffs of Picardy, not far from Saint Valery, a dangerous coast on which almost every year many ships are totally wrecked, being driven on shore by the northwesters, which render the navigation of the Channel so perilous.

From the interior of the Castle is heard the howling of a violent tempest, which has arisen during the night; a frequent formidable noise, like the discharge of artillery, thunders in the distance, and is repeated by the echoes of the shore; it is the sea breaking with fury against the high rocks which are overlooked by the ancient Manor House.

It is about seven o'clock in the morning. Daylight is not yet visible through the windows of a large room situate on the ground-floor. In this apartment, in which a lamp is burning, a woman of about sixty years of age, with a simple and honest countenance, dressed as a rich farmer's wife of Picardy, is already occupied with her needle-work, not-

withstanding the early hour. Close by, the husband of this woman, about the same age as herself, is seated at a large table, sorting and putting up in bags divers samples of wheat and oats. The face of this white-haired man is intelligent and open, announcing good sense and honesty, enlivened by a touch of rustic humor; he wears a shooting-jacket of green cloth, and long gaiters of tan-colored leather, which half conceal his black velveteen breeches.

The terrible storm which rages without renders still more agreeable the picture of this peaceful interior. A rousing fire burns in a broad chimney-place faced with white marble, and throws its joyous light on the carefully polished floor; nothing can be more cheerful than the old-fashioned chintz hangings and curtains with red Chinese figures upon a white ground, and the panels over the door painted with pastoral scenes in the style of Watteau. A clock of Sèvres china, and rosewood furniture inlaid with green—quaint and portly furniture, twisted into all sorts of grotesque shapes—complete the decorations of this apartment.

Out-doors, the gale continued to howl furiously, and sometimes a gust of wind would rush down the chimney, or shake the fastenings of the windows. The man who was occupied in sorting the samples of grain was M. Dupont, bailiff of Cardoville manor.

"Holy Virgin!" said his wife; "what dreadful weather, my dear! This M. Rodin, who is to come here this morning, as the Princess de Saint-Dizier's steward announced to us, picked out a very bad day for it."

"Why, in truth, I have rarely heard such a hurricane. If M. Rodin has never seen the sea in its fury, he may feast his eyes to-day with the sight."

"What can it be that brings this M. Rodin, my dear?"

"Faith! I know nothing about it. The steward tells me in his letter to show M. Rodin the greatest attention, and to obey him as if he were my master. It will be for him to explain himself, and for me to execute his orders, since he comes on the part of the princess."

"By rights he should come from Mademoiselle Adrienne, as the land belongs to her since the death of the duke her father."

"Yes; but the princess being aunt to the young lady, her steward manages Mademoiselle Adrienne's affairs — so whether one or the other, it amounts to the same thing."

"May be M. Rodin means to buy the estate. Though, to be sure, that stout lady who came from Paris last week on

purpose to see the château appeared to have a great wish for it."

At these words the bailiff began to laugh with a sly look.

"What is there to laugh at, Dupont?" asked his wife, a very good creature, but not famous for intelligence or penetration.

"I laugh," answered Dupont, "to think of the face and figure of that enormous woman: with such a look, who the devil would call themselves Madame de la Sainte Colombe—Mrs. Holy Dove? A pretty saint, and a pretty dove, truly! She is round as a hogshead, with the voice of a town-crier, has gray moustachios like an old grenadier, and without her knowing it, I heard her say to her servant: 'Stir your stumps, *my hearty!*'—and yet she calls herself Sainte Colombe!"

"How hard on her you are, Dupont; a body don't choose one's name. And, if she has a beard, it is not the lady's fault."

"No—but it is her fault to call herself Sainte Colombe. Do you imagine it her true name? Ah, my poor Catherine, you are yet very green in some things."

"While you, my poor Dupont, are well read in slander! This lady seems very respectable. The first thing she asked for on arriving was the chapel of the Castle, of which she had heard speak. She even said that she would make some embellishments in it; and, when I told her we had no church in this little place, she appeared quite vexed not to have a curate in the village."

"Oh, to be sure! that's the first thought of your upstarts—to play the great lady of the parish, like your titled people."

"Madame de la Sainte Colombe need not play the great lady, because she is one."

"She! a great lady? Oh, lor'!"

"Yes—only see how she was dressed, in scarlet gown, and violet gloves like a bishop's; and, when she took off her bonnet, she had a diamond band round her head-dress of false, light hair, and diamond ear-drops as large as my thumb, and diamond rings on every finger! None of your tuppenny beauties would wear so many diamonds in the middle of the day."

"You are a pretty judge!"

"That is not all."

"Do you mean to say there's more?"

"She talked of nothing but dukes, and marquises, and counts, and very rich gentlemen, who visit at her house, and

are her most intimate friends; and then, when she saw the summer house in the park, half-burnt by the Prussians, which our late master never rebuilt, she asked, 'What are those ruins there?' and I answered: 'Madame, it was in the time of the Allies that the pavilion was burnt.'—'Oh, my dear,' cried she; 'our allies, good, dear allies! they and the Restoration began my fortune!' So you see, Dupont, I said to myself directly: 'She was no doubt one of the noble women who fled abroad——"

"Madame de la Sainte Colombe!" cried the bailiff, laughing heartily. "Oh my poor, poor wife!"

"Oh, it is all very well; but because you have been three years at Paris, don't think yourself a conjurer!"

"Catherine, let's drop it: you will make me say some folly, and there are certain things which dear, good creatures like you need never know."

"I cannot tell what you are driving at, only try to be less slanderous—for, after all, should Madame de la Sainte Colombe buy the estate, will you be sorry to remain as her bailiff, eh?"

"Not I—for we are getting old, my good Catherine; we have lived here twenty years, and we have been too honest to provide for our old days by pilfering—and truly, at our age, it would be hard to seek another place, which perhaps we should not find. What I regret is, that Mademoiselle Adrienne should not keep the land; it seems that she wished to sell it, against the will of the princess."

"Good gracious, Dupont! is it not very extraordinary that Mademoiselle Adrienne should have the disposal of her large fortune so early in life?"

"Faith! simple enough. Our young lady, having no father or mother, is mistress of her property, besides having a famous little will of her own. Dost remember, ten years ago, when the count brought her down here one summer?—what an imp of mischief! and then what eyes! eh?—how they sparkled, even then!"

"It is true that Mademoiselle Adrienne had in her look—an expression—a very uncommon expression for her age."

"If she has kept what her witching, luring face promised, she must be very pretty by this time, notwithstanding the peculiar color of her hair—for, between ourselves, if she had been a tradesman's daughter, instead of a young lady of high birth, they would have called it red."

"There again! more slander."

"What! against Mademoiselle Adrienne? Heaven forbid!

—I always thought that she would be as good as pretty, and it is not speaking ill of her to say she has red hair. On the contrary, it always appears to me so fine, so bright, so sunny, and to suit so well her snowy complexion and black eyes, that in truth I would not have had it other than it was; and I am sure, that now this very color of her hair, which would be a blemish in any one else, must only add to the charm of Mademoiselle Adrienne's face. She must have such a sweet vixen look!"

"Oh! to be candid, she really was a vixen—always running about the park, aggravating her governess, climbing the trees—in fact, playing all manner of naughty tricks."

"I grant you, Mademoiselle Adrienne was a chip of the old block; but then what wit, what engaging ways, and above all, what a good heart!"

"Yes—that she certainly had. Once I remember she gave her shawl and her new merino frock to a poor little beggar girl, and came back to the house in her petticoat, and bare arms."

"Oh, an excellent heart—but headstrong—terribly headstrong!"

"Yes—that she was; and 'tis likely to finish badly, for it seems that she does things at Paris—oh! such things——"

"What things?"

"Oh, my dear! I can hardly venture——"

"Well, but what are they?"

"Why," said the worthy dame, with a sort of embarrassment and confusion, which showed how much she was shocked by such enormities, "they say, that Mademoiselle Adrienne never sets foot in a church, but lives in a kind of heathen temple in her aunt's garden, where she has masked women to dress her up like a goddess, and scratches them very often, because she gets tipsy—without mentioning, that every night she plays on a hunting horn of massive gold—all which causes the utmost grief and despair to her poor aunt the princess."

Here the bailiff burst into a fit of laughter, which interrupted his wife.

"Now tell me," said he, when this first access of hilarity was over, "where did you get these fine stories about Mademoiselle Adrienne?"

"From René's wife, who went to Paris to look for a child to nurse; she called at Saint-Dizier House, to see Madame Grivois, her godmother.—Now Madame Grivois is first bedchamber woman to the princess—and she it was who told

her all this—and surely she ought to know, being in the house."

"Yes, a fine piece of goods that Grivois! once she was a regular bad 'un, but now she professes to be as over-nice as her mistress; like master like man, they say. The princess herself, who is now so stiff and starched, knew how to carry on a lively game in her time. Fifteen years ago, she was no such prude: do you remember that handsome colonel of hussars, who was in garrison at Abbeville? an exiled noble who had served in Russia, whom the Bourbons gave a regiment on the Restoration?"

"Yes, yes—I remember him; but you are really too backbiting."

"Not a bit—I only speak the truth. The colonel spent his whole time here, and every one said he was very warm with this same princess, who is now such a saint. Oh! those were the jolly times. Every evening, some new entertainment at the château. What a fellow that colonel was, to set things going; how well he could act a play!—I remember——"

The bailiff was unable to proceed. A stout maid-servant, wearing the costume and cap of Picardy, entered in haste, and thus addressed her mistress: "Madame, there is a person here that wants to speak to master; he has come in the postmaster's calash from Saint-Valery, and he says that he is M. Rodin."

"M. Rodin?" said the bailiff rising. "Show him in directly!"

* * * * * *

A moment after, M. Rodin made his appearance. According to his custom, he was dressed even more than plainly. With an air of great humility, he saluted the bailiff and his wife, and at a sign from her husband, the latter withdrew.

The cadaverous countenance of M. Rodin, his almost invisible lips, his little reptile eyes, half concealed by their flabby lids, and the sordid style of his dress, rendered his general aspect far from prepossessing; yet this man knew how, when it was necessary, to affect, with diabolical art, so much sincerity and good-nature—his words were so affectionate and subtly penetrating—that the disagreeable feeling of repugnance, which the first sight of him generally inspired, wore off little by little, and he almost always finished by involving his dupe or victim in the tortuous windings of an eloquence as pliant as it was honeyed and perfidious; for ugliness and evil have their fascination, as well as what is good and fair.

The honest bailiff looked at this man with surprise, when he thought of the pressing recommendation of the steward of the Princess de Saint-Dizier; he had expected to see quite another sort of personage, and, hardly able to dissemble his astonishment, he said to him: "Is it to M. Rodin that I have the honor to speak?"

"Yes, sir;—and here is another letter from the steward of the Princess de Saint-Dizier."

"Pray, sir, draw near the fire, whilst I just see what is in this letter. The weather is so bad," continued the bailiff, obligingly, "may I not offer you some refreshment?"

"A thousand thanks, my dear sir; I am off again in an hour."

Whilst M. Dupont read, M. Rodin threw inquisitive glances round the chamber; like a man of skill and experience, he had frequently drawn just and useful inductions from those little appearances, which, revealing a taste or habit, give at the same time some notion of a character; on this occasion, however, his curiosity was at fault.

"Very good, sir," said the bailiff, when he had finished reading; "the steward renews his recommendation, and tells me to attend implicitly to your commands."

"Well, sir, they will amount to very little, and I shall not trouble you long."

"It will be no trouble, but an honor."

"Nay, I know how much your time must be occupied, for, as soon as one enters this château, one is struck with the good order and perfect keeping of everything in it—which proves, my dear sir, what excellent care you take of it."

"Oh, sir, you flatter me."

"Flatter you?—a poor old man like myself has something else to think of. But to come to business: there is a room here which is called the Green Chamber?"

"Yes, sir; the room which the late Count-Duke de Cardoville used for a study."

"You will have the goodness to take me there."

"Unfortunately, it is not in my power to do so. After the death of the Count-Duke, and when the seals were removed, a number of papers were shut up in a cabinet in that room, and the lawyers took the keys with them to Paris."

"Here are those keys," said M. Rodin, showing to the bailiff a large and a small key tied together.

"Oh, sir! that is different. You come to look for papers?"

"Yes—for certain papers—and also for a small mahogany casket, with silver clasps—do you happen to know it?"

"Yes, sir; I have often seen it on the count's writing-table. It must be in the large, lacquered cabinet, of which you have the key."

"You will conduct me to this chamber, as authorized by the Princess de Saint-Dizier?"

"Yes, sir; the princess continues in good health?"

"Perfectly so. She lives altogether above worldly things."

"And Mademoiselle Adrienne?"

"Alas, my dear sir!" said M. Rodin, with a sigh of deep contrition and grief.

"Good heaven, sir! has any calamity happened to Mademoiselle Adrienne?"

"In what sense do you mean it?"

"Is she ill?"

"No, no—she is, unfortunately, as well as she is beautiful."

"Unfortunately!" cried the bailiff, in surprise.

"Alas, yes! for when beauty, youth, and health are joined to an evil spirit of revolt and perversity—to a character which certainly has not its equal upon earth—it would be far better to be deprived of those dangerous advantages, which only become so many causes of perdition. But I conjure you, my dear sir, let us talk of something else: this subject is too painful," said M. Rodin, with a voice of deep emotion, lifting the tip of his little finger to the corner of his right eye, as if to stop a rising tear.

The bailiff did not see the tear, but he saw the gesture, and he was struck with the change in M. Rodin's voice. He answered him, therefore, with much sympathy: "Pardon my indiscretion, sir; I really did not know——"

"It is I who should ask pardon for this involuntary display of feeling—tears are so rare with old men—but if you had seen, as I have, the despair of that excellent princess, whose only fault has been too much kindness, too much weakness, with regard to her niece—by which she has encouraged her—but, once more, let us talk of something else, my dear sir!"

After a moment's pause, during which M. Rodin seemed to recover from his emotion, he said to Dupont: "One part of my mission, my dear sir—that which relates to the Green Chamber—I have now told you; but there is yet another. Before coming to it, however, I must remind you of a circumstance you have perhaps forgotten—namely, that some fifteen or sixteen years ago, the Marquis d'Aigrigny, then colonel of the hussars in garrison at Abbeville, spent some time in this house."

"Oh, sir! what a dashing officer was there! It was only just now, that I was talking about him to my wife. He was the life of the house!—how well he could perform plays—particularly the character of a scapegrace. In the *Two Edmonds*, for instance, he would make you die with laughing, in that part of a drunken soldier—and then, with what a charming voice he sang *Joconde*, sir—better than they could sing it at Paris!"

Rodin, having listened complacently to the bailiff, said to him: "You doubtless know that, after a fierce duel he had with a furious Bonapartist, one General Simon, the Marquis d'Aigrigny (whose private secretary I have now the honor to be) left the world for the church."

"No, sir! is it possible? That fine officer!"

"That fine officer—brave, noble, rich, esteemed, and flattered—abandoned all those advantages for the sorry black gown; and, notwithstanding his name, position, high connections, his reputation as a great preacher, he is still what he was fourteen years ago—a plain *abbé*—whilst so many, who have neither his merit nor his virtues, are archbishops and cardinals."

M. Rodin expressed himself with so much goodness, with such an air of conviction, and the facts he cited appeared to be so incontestable, that M. Dupont could not help exclaiming: "Well, sir, that is splendid conduct!"

"Splendid? Oh, no!" said M. Rodin, with an inimitable expression of simplicity; "it is quite a matter of course—when one has a heart like M. d'Aigrigny's. But amongst all his good qualities, he has particularly that of never forgetting worthy people—people of integrity, honor, conscience—and therefore, my dear M. Dupont, he has not forgotten you."

"What, the most noble marquis deigns to remember——"

"Three days ago, I received a letter from him, in which he mentions your name."

"Is he then at Paris?"

"He will be there soon, if not there now. He went to Italy about three months ago, and, during his absence, he received a very sad piece of news—the death of his mother, who was passing the autumn on one of the estates of the Princess de Saint-Dizier."

"Oh, indeed! I was not aware of it."

"Yes, it was a cruel grief to him; but we must all resign ourselves to the will of Providence!"

"And with regard to what subject did the marquis do me the honor to mention my name?"

"I am going to tell you. First of all, you must know that this house is sold. The bill of sale was signed the day before my departure from Paris."

"Oh, sir! that renews all my uneasiness."

"Pray, why?"

"I am afraid that the new proprietors may not choose to keep me as their bailiff."

"Now see what a lucky chance! It is just on that subject that I am going to speak to you."

"Is it possible?"

"Certainly. Knowing the interest which the marquis feels for you, I am particularly desirous that you should keep this place, and I will do all in my power to serve you, if——"

"Ah, sir!" cried Dupont, interrupting Rodin; "what gratitude do I not owe you! It is Heaven that sends you to me!"

"Now, my dear sir, you flatter me in your turn; but I ought to tell you, that I am obliged to annex a small condition to my support."

"Oh, by all means! Only name it, sir—name it!"

"The person who is about to inhabit this mansion, is an old lady in every way worthy of veneration; Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is the name of this respectable——"

"What, sir?" said the bailiff, interrupting Rodin; "Madame de la Sainte-Colombe the lady who has bought us out?"

"Do you know her?"

"Yes, sir, she came last week to see the estate. My wife persists that she is a great lady; but—between ourselves—judging by certain words that I heard her speak——"

"You are full of penetration, my dear M. Dupont. Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is far from being a great lady. I believe she was neither more nor less than a milliner, under one of the wooden porticoes of the Palais Royal. You see, that I deal openly with you."

"And she boasted of all the noblemen, French and foreign, who used to visit her!"

"No doubt, they came to buy bonnets for their wives! However, the fact is, that, having gained a large fortune—and, after being in youth and middle age—indifferent—alas! more than indifferent to the salvation of her soul—Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is now in a likely way to experience grace—which renders her, as I told you, worthy of veneration, because nothing is so respectable as a sincere repentance—always providing it to be lasting. Now to make the good

work sure and effectual, we shall need your assistance, my dear M. Dupont."

"Mine, sir! what can I do in it?"

"A great deal; and I will explain to you how. There is no church in this village, which stands at an equal distance from either of two parishes. Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, wishing to make choice of one of the two clergymen, will naturally apply to you and Madame Dupont, who have long lived in these parts, for information respecting them."

"Oh! in that case the choice will soon be made. The incumbent of Danicourt is one of the best of men."

"Now that is precisely what you must not say to Madame de la Sainte-Colombe."

"How so?"

"You must, on the contrary, much praise, without ceasing, the curate of Roiville, the other parish, so as to decide this good lady to trust herself to his care."

"And why, sir, to him rather than to the other?"

"Why?—because, if you and Madame Dupont succeed in persuading Madame de la Sainte-Colombe to make the choice I wish, you will be certain to keep your place as bailiff. I give you my word of it, and what I promise I perform."

"I do not doubt, sir, that you have this power," said Dupont, convinced by Rodin's manner, and the authority of his words; "but I should like to know——"

"One word more," said Rodin, interrupting him; "I will deal openly with you, and tell you why I insist on the preference which I beg you to support. I should be grieved if you saw in all this the shadow of an intrigue. It is only for the purpose of doing a good action. The curate of Roiville, for whom I ask your influence, is a man for whom M. d'Aigrigny feels a deep interest. Though very poor, he has to support an aged mother. Now, if he had the spiritual care of Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, he would do more good than any one else, because he is full of zeal and patience; and then it is clear he would reap some little advantages, by which his old mother might profit—there you see is the secret of this mighty scheme. When I knew that this lady was disposed to buy an estate in the neighborhood of our friend's parish, I wrote about it to the marquis; and he, remembering you, desired me to ask you to render him this small service, which, as you see, will not remain without a recompense. For I tell you once more, and I will prove it, that I have the power to keep you in your place as bailiff."

"Well, sir," replied Dupont, after a moment's reflection,

"you are so frank and obliging, that I will imitate your sincerity. In the same degree that the curate of Danicourt is respected and loved in this country, the curate of Roiville, whom you wish me to prefer to him, is dreaded for his intolerance—and, moreover——"

"Well, and what more?"

"Why, then, they say——"

"Come, what do they say?"

"They say—he is a Jesuit."

Upon these words, M. Rodin burst into so hearty a laugh, that the bailiff was quite struck dumb with amazement—for the countenance of M. Rodin took a singular expression when he laughed. "A Jesuit!" he repeated, with redoubled hilarity; "a Jesuit!—Now really, my dear M. Dupont, for a man of sense, experience, and intelligence, how can you believe such idle stories?—A Jesuit—are there such people as Jesuits?—in our time, above all, can you believe such romance of the Jacobins, hobgoblins of the old freedom lovers?—Come, come; I wager, you have read about them in the Constitutionnel!"

"And yet, sir, they say——"

"Good heavens! what will they not say?—But wise men, prudent men like you, do not meddle with what is said—they manage their own little matters, without doing injury to any one, and they never sacrifice, for the sake of nonsense, a good place, which secures them a comfortable provision for the rest of their days. I tell you frankly, however much I may regret it, that should you not succeed in getting the preference for my man, you will not remain bailiff here."

"But, sir," said poor Dupont, "it will not be my fault, if this lady, hearing a great deal in praise of the other curate, should prefer him to your friend."

"Ah! but if, on the other hand, persons who have long lived in the neighborhood—persons worthy of confidence, whom she will see every day—tell Madame de la Sainte-Colombe a great deal of good of my friend, and a great deal of harm of the other curate, she will prefer the former, and you will continue bailiff."

"But, sir—that would be calumny!" cried Dupont.

"Pshaw, my dear M. Dupont!" said Rodin, with an air of sorrowful and affectionate reproach, "how can you think me capable of giving you evil counsel?—I was only making a supposition. You wish to remain bailiff on this estate. I offer you the certainty of doing so—it is for you to consider and decide."

"But, sir——"

"One word more—or rather one more condition—as important as the other. Unfortunately, we have seen clergymen take advantage of the age and weakness of their penitents, unfairly to benefit either themselves or others: I believe our protégée incapable of any such baseness—but, in order to discharge my responsibility—and yours also, as you will have contributed to his appointment—I must request that you will write to me twice a week, giving the most exact detail of all that you have remarked in the character, habits, connections, pursuits, of Madame de la Sainte-Colombe—for the influence of a confessor, you see, reveals itself in the whole conduct of life, and I should wish to be fully edified by the proceedings of my friend, without his being aware of it—or, if anything blameable were to strike you, I should be immediately informed of it by this weekly correspondence."

"But, sir—that would be to act as a spy?" exclaimed the unfortunate bailiff.

"Now, my dear M. Dupont! how can you thus brand the sweetest, most wholesome of human desires—mutual confidence?—I ask of you nothing else—I ask of you to write to me confidentially the details of all that goes on here. On these two conditions, inseparable one from the other, you remain bailiff; otherwise, I shall be forced, with grief and regret, to recommend some one else to Madame de la Sainte-Colombe."

"I beg you, sir," said Dupont, with emotion, "be generous without any conditions!—I and my wife have only this place to give us bread, and we are too old to find another. Do not expose our probity of forty years' standing to be tempted by the fear of want, which is so bad a counsellor!"

"My dear M. Dupont, you are really a great child: you must reflect upon this, and give me your answer in the course of a week."

"Oh, sir! I implore you——" The conversation was here interrupted by a loud report, which was almost instantaneously repeated by the echoes of the cliffs. "What is that?" said M. Rodin. Hardly had he spoken, when the same noise was again heard more distinctly than before.

"It is the sound of cannon," cried Dupont, rising; "no doubt a ship in distress, or signalling for a pilot."

"My dear," said the bailiff's wife, entering abruptly, "from the terrace, we can see a steamer and a large ship nearly dismasted—they are drifting right upon the shore—the ship is firing minute guns—it will be lost."

"Oh, it is terrible!" cried the bailiff, taking his hat and preparing to go out, "to look on at a shipwreck, and be able to do nothing!"

"Can no help be given to these vessels?" asked M. Rodin.

"If they are driven upon the reefs, no human power can save them; since the last equinox two ships have been lost on this coast."

"Lost with all on board?—Oh, very frightful," said M. Rodin.

"In such a storm, there is but little chance for the crew; no matter," said the bailiff, addressing his wife, "I will run down to the rocks with the people of the farm, and try to save some of them, poor creatures!—Light large fires in several rooms—get ready linen, clothes, cordials—I scarcely dare hope to save any, but we must do our best. Will you come with me, M. Rodin?"

"I should think it a duty, if I could be at all useful, but I am too old and feeble to be of any service," said M. Rodin, who was by no means anxious to encounter the storm. "Your good lady will be kind enough to show me the Green Chamber, and when I have found the articles I require, I will set out immediately for Paris, for I am in great haste."

"Very well, sir. Catherine will show you. Ring the big bell," said the bailiff to his servant; "let all the people of the farm meet me at the foot of the cliff, with ropes and levers."

"Yes, my dear," replied Catherine; "but do not expose yourself."

"Kiss me—it will bring me luck," said the bailiff; and he started at a full run, crying: "Quick! quick; by this time, not a plank may remain of the vessels."

"My dear madam," said Rodin, always impassible, "will you be obliging enough to show me the Green Chamber?"

"Please to follow me, sir," answered Catherine, drying her tears—for she trembled on account of her husband, whose courage she well knew.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TEMPEST.

The sea is raging. Mountainous waves of dark green, marbled with white foam, stand out, in high, deep undulations, from the broad streak of red light, which extends along the horizon. Above are piled heavy masses of black

and sulphurous vapor, whilst a few lighter clouds of a reddish gray, driven by the violence of the wind, rush across the murky sky.

The pale winter sun, before he quite disappears in the great clouds, behind which he is slowly mounting, casts here and there some oblique rays upon the troubled sea, and gilds the transparent crest of some of the tallest waves. A band of snow-white foam boils and rages as far as the eye can reach, along the line of the reefs that bristle on this dangerous coast.

Half-way up a rugged promontory, which juts pretty far into the sea, rises Cardoville Castle; a ray of the sun glitters upon its windows; its brick walls and pointed roofs of slate are visible in the midst of this sky loaded with vapors.

A large, disabled ship, with mere shreds of sail still fluttering from the stumps of broken masts, drives dead upon the coast. Now she rolls her monstrous hull upon the waves—now plunges into their trough. A flash is seen, followed by a dull sound, scarcely perceptible in the midst of the roar of the tempest. That gun is the last signal of distress from this lost vessel, which is fast forging on the breakers.

At the same moment, a steamer, with its long plume of black smoke, is working her way from east to west, making every effort to keep at a distance from the shore, leaving the breakers on her left. The dismasted ship, drifting towards the rocks, at the mercy of the wind and tide, must some time pass right ahead of the steamer.

Suddenly, the rush of a heavy sea laid the steamer upon her side; the enormous wave broke furiously on her deck; in a second the chimney was carried away, the paddle box stove in, one of the wheels rendered useless. A second white-cap, following the first, again struck the vessel amidships, and so increased the damage that, no longer answering to the helm, she also drifted towards the shore, in the same direction as the ship. But the latter, though further from the breakers, presented a greater surface to the wind and sea, and so gained upon the steamer in swiftness that a collision between the two vessels became imminent—a new danger added to all the horrors of the now certain wreck.

The ship was an English vessel, the "Black Eagle," homeward bound from Alexandria, with passengers, who, arriving from India and Java, *via* the Red Sea, had disembarked at the Isthmus of Suez, from on board the steamship "Ruyter." The "Black Eagle," quitting the Straits of Gib-

raltar, had gone to touch at the Azores. She headed thence for Portsmouth, when she was overtaken in the Channel by the northwester. The steamer was the "William Tell," coming from Germany, by way of the Elbe, and bound, in the last place, for Hamburg to Havre.

These two vessels, the sport of enormous rollers, driven along by tide and tempest, were now rushing upon the breakers with frightful speed. The deck of each offered a terrible spectacle; the loss of crew and passengers appeared almost certain, for before them a tremendous sea broke on jagged rocks, at the foot of a perpendicular cliff.

The captain of the "Black Eagle," standing on the poop, holding by the remnant of a spar, issued his last orders in this fearful extremity with courageous coolness. The smaller boats had been carried away by the waves; it was in vain to think of launching the long-boat; the only chance of escape in case the ship should not be immediately dashed to pieces on touching the rocks, was to establish a communication with the land by means of a life-line—almost the last resort for passing between the shore and a stranded vessel.

The deck was covered with passengers, whose cries and terror augmented the general confusion. Some, struck with a kind of stupor, and clinging convulsively to the shrouds, awaited their doom in a state of stupid insensibility. Others wrung their hands in despair, or rolled upon the deck uttering horrible imprecations. Here, women knelt down to pray; there, others hid their faces in their hands, that they might not see the awful approach of death. A young mother, pale as a spectre, holding her child clasped tightly to her bosom, went supplicating from sailor to sailor, and offering a purse full of gold and jewels to any one that would take charge of her son.

These cries, and tears, and terror contrasted with the stern and silent resignation of the sailors. Knowing the imminence of the inevitable danger, some of them stripped themselves of part of their clothes, waiting for the moment to make a last effort, to dispute their lives with the fury of the waves; others renouncing all hope, prepared to meet death with stoical indifference.

Here and there, touching or awful episodes rose in relief, if one may so express it, from this dark and gloomy background of despair.

A young man of about eighteen or twenty, with shiny black hair, copper-colored complexion, and perfectly regular and handsome features, contemplated this scene of dismay and

horror with that sad calmness peculiar to those who have often braved great perils; wrapped in a cloak, he leaned his back against the bulwarks, with his feet resting against one of the bulkheads. Suddenly, the unhappy mother, who, with her child in her arms, and gold in her hand, had in vain addressed herself to several of the mariners, to beg them to save her boy, perceiving the young man with the copper-colored complexion, threw herself on her knees before him, and lifted her child towards him with a burst of inexpressible agony. The young man took it, mournfully shook his head, and pointed to the furious waves—but, with a meaning gesture, he appeared to promise that he would at least try to save it. Then the young mother, in a mad transport of hope, seized the hand of the youth, and bathed it with her tears.

Further on, another passenger of the "Black Eagle," seemed animated by sentiments of the most active pity. One would hardly have given him five-and-twenty years of age. His, long, fair locks fell in curls on either side of his angelic countenance. He wore a black cassock and white neck-band. Applying himself to comfort the most desponding, he went from one to the other, and spoke to them pious words of hope and resignation; to hear him console some, and encourage others, in language full of unction, tenderness, and ineffable charity, one would have supposed him unaware or indifferent to the perils that he shared.

On his fine, mild features, was impressed a calm and sacred intrepidity, a religious abstraction from every terrestrial thought; from time to time, he raised to heaven his large blue eyes, beaming with gratitude, love, and serenity, as if to thank God for having called him to one of those formidable trials in which the man of humanity and courage may devote himself for his brethren, and, if not able to rescue them at all, at least die with them, pointing to the sky. One might almost have taken him for an angel, sent down to render less cruel the strokes of inexorable fate.

Strange contrast! not far from this young man's angelic beauty, there was another being, who resembled an evil spirit!

Boldly mounted on what was left of the bowsprit, to which he held on by means of some remaining cordage, this man looked down upon the terrible scene that was passing on the deck. A grim, wild joy lighted up his countenance of a dead yellow, that tint peculiar to those who spring from the union of the white race with the East. He wore only a shirt

and linen drawers; from his neck was suspended, by a cord, a cylindrical tin box, similar to that in which soldiers carry their leave of absence.

The more the danger augmented, the nearer the ship came to the breakers, or to a collision with the steamer, which she was now rapidly approaching—a terrible collision, which would probably cause the two vessels to founder before even they touched the rocks—the more did the infernal joy of this passenger reveal itself in frightful transports. He seemed to long, with ferocious impatience, for the moment when the work of destruction should be accomplished. To see him thus feasting with avidity on all the agony, the terror, and the despair of those around him, one might have taken him for the apostle of one of those sanguinary deities, who, in barbarous countries, preside over murder and carnage.

By this time the "Black Eagle," driven by the wind and waves, came so near the "William Tell" that the passengers on the deck of the nearly dismantled steamer were visible from the first-named vessel.

These passengers were no longer numerous. The heavy sea, which stove in the paddle-box and broke one of the paddles, had also carried away nearly the whole of the bulwarks on that side; the waves, entering every instant by this large opening, swept the decks with irresistible violence, and every time bore away with them some fresh victims.

Amongst the passengers, who seemed only to have escaped this danger to be hurled against the rocks, or crushed in the encounter of the two vessels, one group was especially worthy of the most tender and painful interest. Taking refuge abaft, a tall old man, with bald forehead and gray moustache, had lashed himself to a stanchion, by winding a piece of rope round his body, whilst he clasped in his arms, and held fast to his breast, two girls of fifteen or sixteen, half enveloped in a pelisse of reindeer-skin. A large, fallow, Siberian dog, dripping with water, and barking furiously at the waves, stood close to their feet.

These girls, clasped in the arms of the old man, also pressed close to each other; but, far from being lost in terror, they raised their eyes to heaven, full of confidence and ingenuous hope, as though they expected to be saved by the intervention of some supernatural power.

A frightful shriek of horror and despair, raised by the passengers of both the vessels, was heard suddenly above

the roar of the tempest. At the moment when, plunging deeply between two waves, the broadside of the steamer was turned towards the bows of the ship, the latter, lifted to a prodigious height on a mountain of water, remained, as it were, suspended over the "William Tell," during the second which preceded the shock of the two vessels.

There are sights of so sublime a horror, that it is impossible to describe them. Yet, in the midst of these catastrophes, swift as thought, one catches sometimes a momentary glimpse of a picture, rapid and fleeting, as if illumined by a flash of lightning.

Thus, when the "Black Eagle," poised aloft by the flood, was about to crash down upon the "William Tell," the young man with the angelic countenance and fair, waving locks bent over the prow of the ship, ready to cast himself into the sea to save some victim. Suddenly, he perceived on board the steamer, on which he looked down from the summit of the immense wave, the two girls extending their arms towards him in supplication. They appeared to recognize him, and gazed on him with a sort of ecstacy and religious homage!

For a second, in spite of the horrors of the tempest, in spite of the approaching shipwreck, the looks of those three beings met. The features of the young man were expressive of sudden and profound pity; for the maidens with their hands clasped in prayer, seemed to invoke him as their expected Saviour. The old man, struck down by the fall of a plank, lay helpless on the deck. Soon all disappeared together.

A fearful mass of water dashed the "Black Eagle" down upon the "William Tell," in the midst of a cloud of boiling foam. To the dreadful crash of the two great bodies of wood and iron, which splintering against one another, instantly foundered, one loud cry was added—a cry of agony and death—the cry of a hundred human creatures swallowed up at once by the waves!

And then—nothing more was visible!

A few moments after, the fragments of the two vessels appeared in the trough of the sea, and on the caps of the waves—with here and there the contracted arms, the livid and despairing faces of some unhappy wretches, striving to make their way to the reefs along the shore, at the risk of being crushed to death by the shock of the furious breakers.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SHIPWRECK.

While the bailiff was gone to the sea-shore, to render help to those of the passengers who might escape from the inevitable shipwreck, M. Rodin, conducted by Catherine to the Green Chamber, had there found the articles that he was to take with him to Paris.

After passing two hours in this apartment, very indifferent to the fate of the shipwrecked persons, which alone absorbed the attention of the inhabitants of the Castle, Rodin returned to the chamber commonly occupied by the bailiff, a room which opened upon a long gallery. When he entered it he found nobody there. Under his arm he held a casket, with silver fastenings, almost black from age, whilst one end of a large red morocco portfolio projected from the breast-pocket of his half-buttoned great coat.

Had the cold and livid countenance of the Abbé d'Aigrigny's secretary been able to express joy otherwise than by a sarcastic smile, his features would have been radiant with delight; for, just then, he was under the influence of the most agreeable thoughts. Having placed the casket upon a table, it was with marked satisfaction that he thus communed with himself:

"All goes well. It was prudent to keep these papers here till this moment, for one must always be on guard against the diabolical spirit of that Adrienne de Cardoville, who appears to guess instinctively what it is impossible she should know. Fortunately, the time approaches when we shall have no more need to fear her. Her fate will be a cruel one; it must be so. Those proud, independent characters are at all times our natural enemies—they are so by their very essence—how much more when they show themselves peculiarly hurtful and dangerous! As for La Sainte-Colombe, the bailiff is sure to act for us; between what the fool calls his conscience, and the dread of being at his age deprived of a livelihood, he will not hesitate. I wish to have him because he will serve us better than a stranger; his having been here twenty years will prevent all suspicion on the part of that dull and narrow-minded woman. Once

in the hands of our man at Roiville, I will answer for the result. The course of all such gross and stupid women is traced beforehand: in their youth, they serve the devil; in riper years, they make others serve him; in their old age, they are horribly afraid of him; and this fear must continue till she has left us the Château de Cardoville, which, from its isolated position, will make us an excellent college. All then goes well. As for the affair of the medals, the 13th of February approaches, without news from Joshua—evidently, Prince Djalma is still kept prisoner by the English in the heart of India, or I must have received letters from Batavia. The daughters of General Simon will be detained at Leipsic for at least a month longer. All our foreign relations are in the best condition. As for our internal affairs——"

Here M. Rodin was interrupted in the current of his reflections by the entrance of Madame Dupont, who was zealously engaged in preparations to give assistance in case of need.

"Now," said she to the servant, "light a fire in the next room; put this warm wine there; your master may be in every minute."

"Well, my dear madam," said Rodin to her, "do they hope to save any of these poor creatures?"

"Alas! I do not know, sir. My husband has been gone nearly two hours. I am terribly uneasy on his account. He is so courageous, so imprudent, if once he thinks he can be of any service."

"Courageous even to imprudence," said Rodin to himself, impatiently; "I do not like that."

"Well," resumed Catherine, "I have here at hand my hot linen, my cordials—heaven grant it may all be of use!"

"We may at least hope so, my dear madam. I very much regretted that my age and weakness did not permit me to assist your excellent husband. I also regret not being able to wait for the issue of his exertions, and to wish him joy if successful—for I am unfortunately compelled to depart, my moments are precious. I shall be much obliged if you will have the carriage got ready."

"Yes, sir; I will see about it directly."

"One word, my dear, good Madame Dupont. You are a woman of sense, and excellent judgment. Now I have put your husband in the way to keep, if he will, his situation as bailiff of the estate——"

"Is it possible? What gratitude do we not owe you!

Without this place what would become of us at our time of life?"

"I have only saddled my promise with two conditions—mere trifles—he will explain all that to you."

"Ah, sir! we shall regard you as our deliverer."

"You are too good. Only, on two little conditions——"

"If there were a hundred, sir, we should gladly accept them. Think what we should be without this place—penniless—absolutely penniless!"

"I reckon upon you then; for the interest of your husband, you will try to persuade him."

"Missus! I say, missus! here's master come back," cried a servant, rushing into the chamber.

"Has he many with him?"

"No, missus; he is alone."

"Alone! alone?"

"Quite alone, missus."

A few moments after, M. Dupont entered the room; his clothes were streaming with water; to keep his hat on in the midst of the storm, he had tied it down to his head by means of his cravat, which was knotted under his chin; his gaiters were covered with chalky stains.

"There I have thee, my dear love!" cried his wife, tenderly embracing him. "I have been so uneasy!"

"Up to the present moment—THREE SAVED."

"God be praised, my dear M. Dupont!" said Rodin; "at least your efforts will not have been all in vain."

"Three, only three?" said Catherine. "Gracious heaven!"

"I only speak of those I saw myself, near the little creek of Goëlands. Let us hope there may be more saved on other parts of the coast."

"Yes, indeed; happily, the shore is not equally steep in all parts."

"And where are these interesting sufferers, my dear sir?" asked Rodin, who could not avoid remaining a few instants longer.

"They are mounting the cliffs, supported by our people. As they cannot walk very fast, I ran on before to console my wife, and to take the necessary measures for their reception. First of all, my dear, you must get ready some women's clothes."

"There is then a woman amongst the persons saved?"

"There are two girls—fifteen or sixteen years of age at the most—mere children—and so pretty!"

"Poor little things!" said Rodin, with an affectation of interest.

"The person to whom they owe their lives is with them. He is a real hero!"

"A hero?"

"Yes; only fancy——"

"You can tell me all this by and by. Just slip on this dry warm dressing-gown, and take some of this hot wine. You are wet through."

"I'll not refuse, for I am almost frozen to death. I was telling you that the person who saved these young girls was a hero; and certainly his courage was beyond anything one could have imagined. When I left here with the men of the farm, we descended the little winding path, and arrived at the foot of the cliff—near the little creek of Goëlands, fortunately somewhat sheltered from the waves by five or six enormous masses of rock stretching out into the sea. Well, what should we find there? Why, the two young girls I spoke of, in a swoon, with their feet still in the water, and their bodies resting against a rock, as though they had been placed there by some one, after being withdrawn from the sea."

"Dear children! it is quite touching!" said M. Rodin, raising, as usual, the tip of his little finger to the corner of his right eye, as though to dry a tear, which was very seldom visible.

"What struck me was their great resemblance to each other," resumed the bailiff; "only one in the habit of seeing them could tell the difference."

"Twin-sisters, no doubt," said Madame Dupont.

"One of the poor things," continued the bailiff, "held between her clasped hands a little bronze medal, which was suspended from her neck by a chain of the same material."

Rodin generally maintained a very stooping posture; but at these last words of the bailiff, he drew himself up suddenly, whilst a faint color spread itself over his livid cheeks. In any other person, these symptoms would have appeared of little consequence; but in Rodin, accustomed for long years to control and dissimulate his emotions, they announced no ordinary excitement. Approaching the bailiff, he said to him in a slightly agitated voice, but still with an air of indifference: "It was doubtless a pious relic. Did you see what was inscribed on this medal?"

"No, sir; I did not think of it."

"And the two young girls were like one another—very much like, you say?"

"So like, that one would hardly know which was which. Probably they are orphans, for they are dressed in mourning."

"Oh! dressed in mourning?" said M. Rodin, with another start.

"Alas! orphans so young!" said Madame Dupont, wiping her eyes.

"As they had fainted away, we carried them further on to a place where the sand was quite dry. While we were busy about this, we saw the head of a man appear from behind one of the rocks, which he was trying to climb, clinging to it by one hand; we ran to him, and luckily in the nick of time, for he was clean worn out, and fell exhausted into the arms of our men. It was of him I spoke when I talked of a hero; for, not content with having saved the two young girls by his admirable courage, he had attempted to rescue a third person, and had actually gone back amongst the rocks and breakers—but his strength failed him, and, without the aid of our men, he would certainly have been washed away from the ridge to which he clung."

"He must indeed be a fine fellow!" said Catherine.

Rodin, with his head bowed upon his breast, seemed quite indifferent to this conversation. The dismay and stupor, in which he had been plunged, only increased upon reflection. The two girls, who had just been saved, were fifteen years of age; were dressed in mourning; were so like, that one might be taken for the other; one of them wore round her neck a chain with a bronze medal; he could scarcely doubt that they were the daughters of General Simon. But how could those sisters be amongst the number of shipwrecked passengers? How could they have escaped from the prison at Leipsic? How did it happen, that he had not been informed of it? Could they have fled, or had they been set at liberty? How was it possible that he should not be apprised of such an event? But these secondary thoughts, which offered themselves in crowds to the mind of M. Rodin, were swallowed up in the one fact: "The daughters of General Simon are here!"—His plan, so laboriously laid, was thus entirely destroyed.

"When I speak of the deliverer of these young girls," resumed the bailiff, addressing his wife, and without remarking M. Rodin's absence of mind, "you are expecting no doubt to see a Hercules?—well, he is altogether the reverse. He is almost a boy in look, with fair, sweet face, and light,

curling locks. I left him a cloak to cover him, for he had nothing on but his shirt, black knee-breeches, and a pair of black worsted stockings—which struck me as singular."

"Why, it was certainly not a sailor's dress."

"Besides, though the ship was English, I believe my hero is a Frenchman, for he speaks our language as well as we do. What brought the tears to my eyes, was to see the young girls, when they came to themselves. As soon as they saw him, they threw themselves at his feet, and seemed to look up to him and thank him, as one would pray. Then they cast their eyes around them, as if in search of some other person, and, having exchanged a few words, they fell sobbing into each other's arms."

"What a dreadful thing it is! How many poor creatures must have perished!"

"When we quitted the rocks, the sea had already cast ashore seven dead bodies, besides fragments of the wreck, and packages. I spoke to some of the coast-guard, and they will remain all day on the look-out; and if, as I hope, any more should escape with life, they are to be brought here. But surely that is the sound of voices!—yes, it is our ship-wrecked guests!"

The bailiff and his wife ran to the door of the room—that door, which opened on the long gallery—whilst Rodin, biting convulsively his flat nails, awaited with angry impatience the arrival of the strangers. A touching picture soon presented itself to his view.

From the end of the darksome gallery, only lighted on one side by several windows, three persons, conducted by a peasant, advanced slowly. This group consisted of the two maidens, and the intrepid young man to whom they owed their lives. Rose and Blanche were on either side of their deliverer, who, walking with great difficulty, supported himself lightly on their arms.

Though he was full twenty-five years of age, the juvenile countenance of this man made him appear younger. His long, fair hair, parted on the forehead, streamed wet and smooth over the collar of a large brown cloak, with which he had been covered. It would be difficult to describe the adorable expression of goodness in his pale, mild face, as pure as the most ideal creations of Raphael's pencil—for that divine artist alone could have caught the melancholy grace of those exquisite features, the serenity of that celestial look, from eyes limpid and blue as those of an archangel, or of a martyr ascended to the skies.

Yes, of a martyr! for a blood-red halo already encircled that beauteous head. Piteous sight to see! just above his light eyebrows, and rendered still more visible by the effect of the cold, a narrow cicatrix, from a wound inflicted many months before, appeared to encompass his fair forehead with a purple band; and (still more sad!) his hands had been cruelly pierced by a crucifixion—his feet had suffered the same injury—and, if he now walked with so much difficulty, it was that his wounds had reopened, as he struggled over the sharp rocks.

This young man was Gabriel, the priest attached to the foreign mission, the adopted son of Dagobert's wife. He was a priest and martyr—for, in our days, there are still martyrs, as in the time when the Cæsars flung the early Christians to the lions and tigers of the circus.

Yes, in our days, the children of the people—for it is almost always amongst them that heroic and disinterested devotion may still be found—the children of the people, led by an honorable conviction, because it is courageous and sincere, go to all parts of the world, to try and propagate their faith, and brave both torture and death with the most unpretending valor.

How many of them, victims of some barbarous tribe, have perished, obscure and unknown, in the midst of the solitudes of the two worlds!—And for these humble soldiers of the cross, who have nothing but their faith and their intrepidity, there is never reserved on their return (and they seldom do return) the rich and sumptuous dignities of the church. Never does the purple or the mitre conceal their scarred brows and mutilated limbs; like the great majority of other soldiers, they die forgotten.*

In their ingenuous gratitude, the daughters of General Simon, as soon as they recovered their senses after the shipwreck, and felt themselves able to ascend the cliffs, would not leave to any other person the care of sustaining the faltering steps of him who had rescued them from certain death.

* We always remember with emotion the end of a letter written, two or three years ago, by one of these young and valiant missionaries, the son of poor parents in Beauce. He was writing to his mother from the heart of Japan, and thus concluded his letter: "Adieu, my dear mother! they say there is much danger where I am now sent to. Pray for me, and tell all our good neighbors that I think of them very often." These few words, addressed from the centre of Asia to poor peasants in a hamlet of France, are only the more touching from their very simplicity.—E. S.

The black garments of Rose and Blanche streamed with water; their faces were deadly pale, and expressive of deep grief; the marks of recent tears were on their cheeks, and, with sad, downcast eyes, they trembled both from agitation and cold, as the agonizing thought recurred to them, that they should never again see Dagobert, their friend and guide; for it was to him that Gabriel had stretched forth a helping hand, to assist him to climb the rocks. Unfortunately, the strength of both had failed, and the soldier had been carried away by a retreating wave.

The sight of Gabriel was a fresh surprise for Rodin, who had retired on one side, in order to observe all; but this surprise was of so pleasant a nature, and he felt so much joy in beholding the missionary safe after such imminent peril, that the painful impression, caused by the view of General Simon's daughters, was a little softened. It must not be forgotten, that the presence of Gabriel in Paris, on the 13th of February, was essential to the success of Rodin's projects.

The bailiff and his wife, who were greatly moved at sight of the orphans, approached them with eagerness. Just then a farm-boy entered the room, crying: "Sir! sir! good news —two more saved from the wreck!"

"Blessing and praise to God for it!" said the missionary.

"Where are they?" asked the bailiff, hastening towards the door.

"There is one who can walk, and is following behind me with Justin; the other was wounded against the rocks, and they are carrying him on a litter made of branches."

"I will run and have him placed in the room below," said the bailiff, as he went out. "Catherine, you can look to the young ladies."

"And the shipwrecked man who can walk—where is he?" asked the bailiff's wife.

"Here he is," said the peasant, pointing to some one who came rapidly along the gallery; "when he heard that the two young ladies were safe in the château—though he is old, and wounded in the head, he took such great strides, that it was all I could do to get here before him."

Hardly had the peasant pronounced these words, when Rose and Blanche, springing up by a common impulse, flew to the door. They arrived there at the same moment as Dagobert.

The soldier, unable to utter a syllable, fell on his knees at the threshold, and extended his arms to the daughters of

General Simon; while Spoil-sport, running to them licked their hands.

But the emotion was too much for Dagobert; and, when he had clasped the orphans in his arms, his head fell backward, and he would have sunk down altogether, but for the care of the peasants. In spite of the observations of the bailiff's wife, on their state of weakness and agitation, the two young girls insisted on accompanying Dagobert, who was carried fainting into an adjoining apartment.

At sight of the soldier, Rodin's face was again violently contracted, for he had till then believed that the guide of General Simon's daughters was dead. The missionary, worn out with fatigue, was leaning upon a chair, and had not yet perceived Rodin.

A new personage, a man with a dead yellow complexion, now entered the room, accompanied by another peasant, who pointed out Gabriel to him. This man, who had just borrowed a smock-frock and a pair of trousers, approached the missionary, and said to him in French, but with a foreign accent: "Prince Djalma has just been brought in here. His first word was to ask for you."

"What does that man say?" cried Rodin, in a voice of thunder; for, at the name of Djalma, he had sprung with one bound to Gabriel's side.

"M. Rodin!" exclaimed the missionary, falling back in surprise.

"M. Rodin," cried the other shipwrecked person; and from that moment, he kept his eye fixed on the correspondent of M. Van Dael.

"You here, sir?" said Gabriel, approaching Rodin with an air of deference, not unmixed with fear.

"What did that man say to you?" repeated Rodin, in an excited tone. "Did he not utter the name of Prince Djalma?"

"Yes, sir; Prince Djalma was one of the passengers on board the English ship, which came from Alexandria, and in which we have just been wrecked. This vessel touched at the Azores, where I then was; the ship that brought me from Charlestown having been obliged to put in there, and being likely to remain for some time, on account of serious damage, I embarked on board the 'Black Eagle,' where I met Prince Djalma. We were bound to Portsmouth, and from thence my intention was to proceed to France."

Rodin did not care to interrupt Gabriel. This new shock had completely paralyzed his thoughts. At length, like a

man who catches at a last hope, which he knows beforehand to be vain, he said to Gabriel: "Can you tell me who this Prince Djalma is?"

"A young man as good as brave—the son of an East Indian king, dispossessed of his territory by the English."

Then, turning towards the other shipwrecked man, the missionary said to him with anxious interest: "How is the Prince? are his wounds dangerous?"

"They are serious contusions, but they will not be mortal," answered the other.

"Heaven be praised!" said the missionary, addressing Rodin; "here, you see, is another saved."

"So much the better," observed Rodin, in a quick, imperious tone.

"I will go see him," said Gabriel, submissively. "You have no orders to give me?"

"Will you be able to leave this place in two or three hours, notwithstanding your fatigue?"

"If it be necessary—yes."

"It is necessary. You will go with me."

Gabriel only bowed in reply, and Rodin sank confounded into a chair, while the missionary went out with the peasant. The man with the sallow complexion still lingered in a corner of the room, unperceived by Rodin.

This man was Faringhea, the half-caste, one of the three chiefs of the Stranglers. Having escaped the pursuit of the soldiers in the ruins of Tchandi, he had killed Mahal the Smuggler, and robbed him of the despatches written by M. Joshua Van Dael to Rodin, as also of the letter by which the smuggler was to have been received as passenger on board the "Ruyter." When Faringhea left the hut in the ruins of Tchandi, he had not been seen by Djalma; and the latter, when he met him on shipboard, after his escape (which we shall explain by and by), not knowing that he belonged to the sect of Phansegars, treated him during the voyage as a fellow-countryman.

Rodin, with his eye fixed and haggard, his countenance of a livid hue, biting his nails to the quick in silent rage, did not perceive the half-caste, who quietly approached him, and laying his hand familiarly on his shoulder, said to him: "Your name is Rodin?"

"What now?" asked the other, starting, and raising his head abruptly.

"Your name is Rodin?" repeated Faringhea.

"Yes. What do you want?"

"You live in the Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins, Paris?"

"Yes. But, once more, what do you want?"

"Nothing now, brother: hereafter, much!"

And Faringhea, retiring, with slow steps, left Rodin alarmed at what had passed; for this man, who scarcely trembled at anything, had quailed before the dark look and grim visage of the Strangler.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DEPARTURE FOR PARIS.

The most profound silence reigns throughout Cardoville House. The tempest has lulled by degrees, and nothing is heard from afar but the hoarse murmur of the waves, as they wash heavily the shore.

Dagobert and the orphans have been lodged in warm and comfortable apartments on the first-floor of the château. Djalma, too severely hurt to be carried upstairs, has remained in a room below. At the moment of the shipwreck, a weeping mother had placed her child in his arms. He had failed in the attempt to snatch this unfortunate infant from certain death, but his generous devotion had hampered his movements, and when thrown upon the rocks, he was almost dashed to pieces. Faringhea, who has been able to convince him of his affection, remains to watch over him.

Gabriel, after administering consolation to Djalma, has reascended to the chamber allotted to him; faithful to the promise he made to Rodin, to be ready to set out in two hours, he has not gone to bed; but, having dried his clothes, he has fallen asleep in a large, high-backed arm-chair, placed in front of a bright coal-fire. His apartment is situated near those occupied by Dagobert and the two sisters.

Spoil-sport, probably quite at his ease in so respectable a dwelling, has quitted the door of Rose and Blanche's chamber, to lie down and warm himself at the hearth, by the side of which the missionary is sleeping. There, with his nose resting on his outstretched paws, he enjoys a feeling of perfect comfort and repose, after so many perils by land and sea. We will not venture to affirm, that he thinks habitually of poor old Jovial; unless we recognize as a token of remembrance on his part, his irresistible propensity to bite all the white horses he has met with, ever since the death of

his venerable companion, though before, he was the most inoffensive of dogs with regard to horses of every color.

Presently one of the doors of the chamber opened, and the two sisters entered timidly. Awake for some minutes, they had risen and dressed themselves, feeling still some uneasiness with respect to Dagobert; though the bailiff's wife, after showing them to their room, had returned again to tell them that the village doctor found nothing serious in the hurt of the old soldier, still they hoped to meet some one belonging to the château, of whom they could make further inquiries about him.

The high back of the old-fashioned arm-chair, in which Gabriel was sleeping, completely screened him from view; but the orphans, seeing their canine friend lying quietly at his feet, thought it was Dagobert reposing there, and hastened towards him on tip-toe. To their great astonishment, they saw Gabriel fast asleep, and stood still in confusion, not daring to advance or recede, for fear of waking him.

The long, light hair of the missionary was no longer wet, and now curled naturally round his neck and shoulders; the paleness of his complexion was the more striking, from the contrast afforded by the deep purple of the damask covering of the arm-chair. His beautiful countenance expressed a profound melancholy, either caused by the influence of some painful dream, or else that he was in the habit of keeping down, when awake, some sad regrets, which revealed themselves without his knowledge when he was sleeping. Notwithstanding this appearance of bitter grief, his features preserved their character of angelic sweetness, and seemed endowed with an inexpressible charm, for nothing is more touching than suffering goodness. The two young girls cast down their eyes, blushed simultaneously, and exchanged anxious glances, as if to point out to each other the slumbering missionary.

"He sleeps, sister," said Rose in a low voice.

"So much the better," replied Blanche, also in a whisper, making a sign of caution; "we shall now be able to observe him well."

"Yes, for we durst not do so, in coming from the sea hither."

"Look! what a sweet countenance!"

"He is just the same as we saw him in our dreams."

"When he promised he would protect us."

"And he has not failed us."

"But here, at least, he is visible."

"Not as it was in the prison at Leipsic, during that dark night."

"And so—he has again rescued us."

"Without him, we should have perished this morning."

"And yet, sister, it seems to me, that in our dreams his countenance shone with light."

"Yes, you know it dazzled us to look at him."

"And then he had not so sad a mien."

"That was because he came then from heaven; now he is upon earth."

"But, sister, had he then that bright red scar round his forehead?"

"Oh, no! we should have certainly perceived it."

"And these other marks on his hands?"

"If he has been wounded, how can he be an archangel?"

"Why not, sister? If he received those wounds in preventing evil, or in helping the unfortunate, who, like us, were about to perish?"

"You are right. If he did not run any danger for those he protects, it would be less noble."

"What a pity that he does not open his eyes!"

"Their expression is so good, so tender!"

"Why did he not speak of our mother, by the way?"

"We were not alone with him; he did not like to do so."

"But now we are alone."

"If we were to pray to him to speak to us?"

The orphans looked doubtingly at each other, with charming simplicity; a bright glow suffused their cheeks, and their young bosoms heaved gently beneath their black dresses.

"You are right. Let us kneel down to him."

"Oh, sister! *our* hearts beat so!" said Blanche, believing rightly, that Rose felt exactly as she did. "And yet it seems to do us good. It is as if some happiness were going to befall us."

The sisters, having approached the arm-chair on tip-toe, knelt down with clasped hands, one to the right the other to the left of the young priest. It was a charming picture. Turning their lovely faces towards him, they said in a low whisper, with a soft, sweet voice, well suited to their youthful appearance: "Gabriel! speak to us of our mother!"

On this appeal, the missionary gave a slight start, half-opened his eyes, and, still in a state of semi-consciousness, between sleep and waking, beheld those two beauteous faces turned towards him, and heard two gentle voices repeat his name.

"Who calls me?" said he, rousing himself, and raising his head.

"It is Blanche and Rose."

It was now Gabriel's turn to blush, for he recognized the young girls, he had saved. "Rise, my sisters!" said he to them; "you should kneel only unto God."

The orphans obeyed, and were soon beside him, holding each other by the hand. "You know my name, it seems," said the missionary with a smile.

"Oh, we have not forgotten it!"

"Who told it you?"

"Yourself."

"I?"

"Yes—when you came from our mother."

"I, my sisters?" said the missionary, unable to comprehend the words of the orphans. "You are mistaken. I saw you to-day for the first time."

"But in our dreams?"

"Yes—do you not remember?—in our dreams."

"In Germany—three months ago, for the first time. Look at us well."

Gabriel could not help smiling at the simplicity of Rose and Blanche, who expected him to remember a dream of theirs; growing more and more perplexed, he repeated: "In your dreams?"

"Certainly; when you gave us such good advice."

"And when we were so sorrowful in prison, your words, which we remembered, consoled us, and gave us courage."

"Was it not you, who delivered us from the prison at Leipsic, in that dark night, when we were not able to see you?"

"I!"

"What other but you would thus have come to our help, and to that of our old friend?"

"We told him, that you would love him, because he loved us, although he would not believe in angels."

"And this morning, during the tempest, we had hardly any fear."

"Because we expected you."

"This morning—yes, my sisters—it pleased heaven to send me to your assistance. I was coming from America, but I have never been in Leipsic. I could not, therefore, have let you out of prison. Tell me, my sisters," added he, with a benevolent smile, "for whom do you take me?"

"For a good angel, whom we have seen already in dreams, sent by our mother from heaven to protect us."

"My dear sisters, I am only a poor priest. It is by mere chance, no doubt, that I bear some resemblance to the angel you have seen in your dreams, and whom you could not see in any other manner—for angels are not visible to mortal eye."

"Angels are not visible?" said the orphans, looking sorrowfully at each other.

"No matter, my dear sisters," said Gabriel, taking them affectionately by the hand; "dreams, like everything else, come from above. Since the remembrance of your mother was mixed up with this dream, it is twice blessed."

At this moment a door opened, and Dagobert made his appearance. Up to this time, the orphans, in their innocent ambition to be protected by an archangel, had quite forgotten the circumstance that Dagobert's wife had adopted a forsaken child, who was called Gabriel, and who was now a priest and missionary.

The soldier, though obstinate in maintaining that his hurt was only a blank wound (to use a term of General Simon's), had allowed it to be carefully dressed by the surgeon of the village, and now wore a black bandage, which concealed one half of his forehead, and added to the natural grimness of his features. On entering the room, he was not a little surprised to see a stranger holding the hands of Rose and Blanche familiarly in his own. This surprise was natural, for Dagobert did not know that the missionary had saved the lives of the orphans, and had attempted to save his also.

In the midst of the storm, tossed about by the waves, and vainly striving to cling to the rocks, the soldier had only seen Gabriel very imperfectly, at the moment when, having snatched the sisters from certain death, the young priest had fruitlessly endeavored to come to his aid. And when, after the shipwreck, Dagobert had found the orphans in safety beneath the roof of the Manor House, he fell, as we have already stated, into a swoon, caused by fatigue, emotion, and the effects of his wound—so that he had again no opportunity of observing the features of the missionary.

The veteran began to frown from beneath his black bandage and thick, gray brows, at beholding a stranger so familiar with Rose and Blanche; but the sisters ran to throw themselves into his arms, and to cover him with filial caresses. His anger was soon dissipated by these marks of affection, though he continued, from time to time,

to cast a suspicious glance at the missionary, who had risen from his seat, but whose countenance he could not well distinguish.

"How is your wound?" asked Rose, anxiously "They told us it was not dangerous."

"Does it still pain?" added Blanche.

"No, children; the surgeon of the village would bandage me up in this manner. If my head was carbonadoed with sabre cuts, I could not have more wrappings. They will take me for an old milksop; it is only a blank wound, and I have a good mind to——" And therewith the soldier raised one of his hands to the bandage.

"Will you leave that alone?" cried Rose catching his arm. "How can you be so unreasonable—at your age?"

"Well, well! don't scold! I will do what you wish, and keep it on." Then, drawing the sisters to one end of the room, he said to them in a low voice, whilst he looked at the young priest from the corner of his eye: "Who is that gentleman who was holding your hands when I came in? He has very much the look of a curate. You see, my children, you must be on your guard; because——"

"*He?*" cried both sisters at once, turning towards Gabriel. "Without him, we should not now be here to kiss you."

"What's that?" cried the soldier, suddenly drawing up his tall figure, and gazing full at the missionary.

"It is our guardian angel," resumed Blanche.

"Without him," said Rose, "we must have perished this morning in the shipwreck."

"Ah! it is he, who——" Dagobert could say no more. With swelling heart, and tears in his eyes, he ran to the missionary, offered him both his hands, and exclaimed in a tone of gratitude impossible to describe: "Sir, I owe you the lives of these two children. I feel what a debt that service lays upon me. I will not say more—because it includes everything!"

Then, as if struck with a sudden recollection, he cried: "Stop! when I was trying to cling to a rock, so as not to be carried away by the waves, was it not you that held out your hand to me? Yes—that light hair—that youthful countenance—yes—it was certainly you—now I am sure of it!"

"Unhappily, sir, my strength failed me, and I had the anguish to see you fall back into the sea."

"I can say nothing more in the way of thanks than what

I have already said," answered Dagobert, with touching simplicity; "in preserving these children you have done more for me than if you had saved my own life. But what heart and courage!" added the soldier, with admiration; "and so young, with such a girlish look!"

"And so," cried Blanche, joyfully, "our Gabriel came to your aid also?"

"Gabriel!" said Dagobert interrupting Blanche, and addressing himself to the priest. "Is your name Gabriel?"

"Yes, sir."

"Gabriel!" repeated the soldier, more and more surprised. "And a priest!" added he.

"A priest of the foreign missions."

"Who—who brought you up?" asked the soldier, with increasing astonishment.

"An excellent and generous woman, whom I revere as the best of mothers: for she had pity on me, a deserted infant, and treated me ever as her son."

"Frances Baudoin—was it not?" said the soldier, with deep emotion.

"It was, sir," answered Gabriel, astonished in his turn. "But how do you know this?"

"The wife of a soldier, eh?" continued Dagobert.

"Yes, of a brave soldier—who, from the most admirable devotion, is even now passing his life in exile—far from his wife—far from his son, my dear brother—for I am proud to call him by that name——"

"My Agricola!—my wife!—when did you leave them?"

"What! is it possible! You the father of Agricola?—Oh! I knew not, until now," cried Gabriel, clasping his hands together, "I knew not all the gratitude that I owed to heaven!"

"And my wife! my child!" resumed Dagobert, in a trembling voice; "how are they? have you news of them?"

"The accounts I received, three months ago, were excellent."

"No; it is too much," cried Dagobert; "it is too much!" The veteran was unable to proceed; his feelings stifled his words, and fell back exhausted in a chair.

And now Rose and Blanche recalled to mind that portion of their father's letter which related to the child named Gabriel, whom the wife of Dagobert had adopted; then they also yielded to transports of innocent joy.

"Our Gabriel is the same as yours—what happiness!" cried Rose.

"Yes, my children! he belongs to you as well as to me. We have all our part in him." Then, addressing Gabriel, the soldier added with affectionate warmth: "Your hand, my brave boy! give me your hand!"

"Oh, sir! you are too good to me."

"Yes—that's it—thank me!—after all thou hast done for us!"

"Does my adopted mother know of your return?" asked Gabriel, anxious to escape from the praises of the soldier.

"I wrote to her five months since, but said that I should come alone; there was a reason for it, which I will explain by and by. Does she still live in the Rue Brise-Miche? It was there Agricola was born."

"She still lives there."

"In that case, she must have received my letter. I wished to write to her from the prison at Leipsic, but it was impossible."

"From prison! Have you just come out of prison?"

"Yes; I come straight from Germany, by the Elbe and Hamburg, and I should be still at Leipsic, but for an event which the Devil must have had a hand in—a good sort of devil, though."

"What do you mean? Pray explain to me."

"That would be difficult, for I cannot explain it to myself. These little ladies," he added, pointing with a smile to Rose and Blanche, "pretended to know more about it than I did, and were continually repeating: "It was the angel that came to our assistance, Dagobert—the good angel we told thee of—though you said you would rather have Spoil-sport to defend us——'"

"Gabriel, I am waiting for you," said a stern voice, which made the missionary start. They all turned round instantly, whilst the dog uttered a deep growl.

It was Rodin. He stood in the doorway leading to the corridor. His features were calm and impassive, but he darted a rapid, piercing glance at the soldier and the sisters.

"Who is that man?" said Dagobert, very little prepossessed in favor of Rodin, whose countenance he found singularly repulsive. "What the mischief does he want?"

"I must go with him." answered Gabriel, in a tone of sorrowful constraint. Then, turning to Rodin, he added: "A thousand pardons! I shall be ready in a moment."

"What!" cried Dagobert, stupefied with amazement, "going the very instant we have just met? No, by my faith! you shall not go. I have too much to tell you, and to

ask in return. We will make the journey together. It will be a real treat for me."

"It is impossible. He is my superior, and I must obey him."

"Your superior?—why, he's in citizen's dress."

"He is not obliged to wear the ecclesiastical garb."

"Rubbish! since he is not in uniform, and there is no provost-marshal in your troop, send him to the——"

"Believe me, I would not hesitate a minute, if it were possible to remain."

"I was right in disliking the phiz of that man," muttered Dagobert between his teeth. Then he added, with an air of impatience and vexation: "Shall I tell him that he will much oblige us by marching off by himself?"

"I beg you not to do so," said Gabriel; "it would be useless; I know my duty, and have no will but my superior's. As soon as you arrive in Paris, I will come and see you, as also my adopted mother, and my dear brother, Agricola."

"Well—if it must be. I have been a soldier, and know what subordination is," said Dagobert, much annoyed. "One must put a good face on bad fortune. So, the day after to-morrow, in the Rue Brise-Miche, my boy; for they tell me I can be in Paris by to-morrow evening, and we set out almost immediately. But I say—there seems to be a strict discipline with you fellows!"

"Yes, it is strict and severe," answered Gabriel, with a shudder, and a stifled sigh.

"Come, shake hands—and let's say farewell for the present. After all, twenty-four hours will soon pass away."

"Adieu! adieu!" replied the missionary, much moved, whilst he returned the friendly pressure of the veteran's hand.

"Adieu, Gabriel!" added the orphans, sighing also, and with tears in their eyes.

"Adieu, my sisters!" said Gabriel—and he left the room with Rodin, who had not lost a word or an incident of this scene.

Two hours after, Dagobert and the orphans had quitted the Castle for Paris, not knowing that Djalma was left at Cardoville, being still too much injured to proceed on his journey. The half-caste, Faringhea, remained with the young prince, not wishing, he said, to desert a fellow-countryman.

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We now conduct the reader to the Rue Brise Miche, the residence of Dagobert's wife.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DAGOBERT'S WIFE.

The following scenes occur in Paris, on the morrow of the day when the shipwrecked travellers were received in Cardoville House.

Nothing can be more gloomy than the aspect of the Rue Brise-Miche, one end of which leads into the Rue Saint-Merry, and the other into the little square of the Cloister, near the church. At this end, the street, or rather alley—for it is not more than eight feet wide—is shut in between immense black, muddy, dilapidated walls, the excessive height of which excludes both air and light; hardly, during the longest days of the year, is the sun able to throw into it a few straggling beams; whilst, during the cold damps of winter, a chilling fog, which seems to penetrate everything, hangs constantly above the miry pavement of this species of oblong well.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening; by the faint, reddish light of the street lamp, hardly visible through the haze, two men, stopping at the angle of one of those enormous walls, exchanged a few words together.

"So," said one, "you understand all about it. You are to watch in the street, till you see them enter No. 5."

"All right!" answered the other.

"And when you see 'em enter so as to make quite sure of the game, go up to Frances Baudoin's room——"

"Under the cloak of asking where the little humpbacked workwoman lives—the sister of that gay girl, the Queen of the Bacchanals."

"Yes—and you must try and find out her address also—from her humpbacked sister, if possible—for it is very important. Women of her feather change their nests like birds, and we have lost track of her."

"Make yourself easy; I will do my best with Humpy, to learn where her sister hangs out."

"And, to give you steam, I'll wait for you at the tavern opposite the Cloister, and we'll have a go of hot wine on your return."

"I'll not refuse, for the night is deucedly cold."

"Don't mention it! This morning the water friz on my sprinkling-brush, and I turned as stiff as a mummy in my

chair at the church-door. Ah, my boy! a distributor of holy water is not always upon roses!"

"Luckily, you have the pickings——"

"Well, well—good luck to you! Don't forget the Fiver, the little passage next to the dyer's shop."

"Yes, yes—all right!" and the two men separated.

One proceeded to the Cloister Square; the other towards the further end of the street, where it led into the Rue Saint-Merry. This latter soon found the number of the house he sought—a tall, narrow building, having, like all the other houses in the street, a poor and wretched appearance. When he saw he was right, the man commenced walking backwards and forwards in front of the door of No. 5.

If the exterior of these buildings was uninviting, the gloom and squalor of the interior cannot be described. The house No. 5 was, in a special degree, dirty and dilapidated. The water, which oozed from the wall, trickled down the dark and filthy staircase. On the second floor, a wisp of straw had been laid on the narrow landing-place, for wiping the feet on; but this straw, being now quite rotten, only served to augment the sickening odor, which arose from want of air, from damp, and from the putrid exhalations of the drains. The few openings, cut at rare intervals in the walls of the staircase, could hardly admit more than some faint rays of glimmering light.

In this quarter, one of the most populous in Paris, such houses as these, poor, cheerless, and unhealthy, are generally inhabited by the working classes. The house in question was of the number. A dyer occupied the ground floor; the deleterious vapors arising from his vats added to the stench of the whole building. On the upper stories, several artisans lodged with their families, or carried on their different trades. Up four flights of stairs was the lodging of Frances Baudoin, wife of Dagobert. It consisted of one room, with a closet adjoining, and was now lighted by a single candle. Agricola occupied a garret in the roof.

Old grayish paper, broken here and there by the cracks, covered the crazy wall, against which rested the bed; scanty curtains, running upon an iron rod, concealed the windows; the brick floor, not polished, but often washed, had preserved its natural color. At one end of this room was a round iron stove, with a large pot for culinary purposes. On the wooden table, painted yellow, marbled with brown, stood a miniature house made of iron—a masterpiece of patience and skill, the work of Agricola Baudoin, Dagobert's son.

A plaster crucifix, hung up against the wall, surrounded by several branches of consecrated box-tree, and various images of saints, very coarsely colored, bore witness to the habits of the soldier's wife. Between the windows stood one of those old walnut-wood presses, curiously fashioned, and almost black with time; an old arm-chair, covered with green cotton velvet (Agricola's first present to his mother), a few rush-bottomed chairs, and a work-table on which lay several bags of coarse, brown cloth, completed the furniture of this room, badly secured by a worm-eaten door. The adjoining closet contained a few kitchen and household utensils.

Mean and poor as this interior may perhaps appear, it would not seem so to the greater number of artisans; for the bed was supplied with two mattresses, clean sheets, and a warm counterpane; the old-fashioned press contained linen; and, moreover, Dagobert's wife occupied all to herself a room as large as those in which numerous families, belonging to honest and laborious workmen, often live and sleep huddled together—only too happy if the boys and girls can have separate beds, or if the sheets and blankets are not pledged at the pawnbroker's.

Frances Baudoin, seated beside the small stove, which, in the cold and damp weather, yielded but little warmth, was busied in preparing her son Agricola's evening meal.

Dagobert's wife was about fifty years of age; she wore a close jacket of blue cotton, with white flowers on it, and a stuff petticoat; a white handkerchief was tied round her head, and fastened under the chin. Her countenance was pale and meagre, the features regular, and expressive of resignation and great kindness. It would have been difficult to find a better, a more courageous mother. With no resource but her labor, she had succeeded, by unwearied energy, in bringing up not only her own son Agricola, but also Gabriel, the poor deserted child, of whom, with admirable devotion, she had ventured to take charge.

In her youth, she had, as it were, anticipated the strength of later life, by twelve years of incessant toil, rendered lucrative by the most violent exertions, and accompanied by such privations as made it almost suicidal. Then (for it was a time of splendid wages, compared to the present), by sleepless nights and constant labor, she contrived to earn about two shillings (fifty sous) a day, and with this she managed to educate her son and her adopted child.

At the end of these twelve years, her health was ruined,

and her strength nearly exhausted; but, at all events, her boys had wanted for nothing, and had received such an education as children of the people can obtain. About this time, M. François Hardy took Agricola as an apprentice, and Gabriel prepared to enter the priest's seminary, under the active patronage of M. Rodin, whose communications with the confessor of Frances Baudoin had become very frequent about the year 1820.

This woman (whose piety had always been excessive) was one of those simple natures, endowed with extreme goodness, whose self-denial approaches to heroism, and who devote themselves in obscurity to a life of martyrdom—pure and heavenly minds, in whom the instincts of the heart supply the place of the intellect!

The only defect, or rather the necessary consequence of this extreme simplicity of character, was the invincible determination she displayed in yielding to the commands of her confessor, to whose influence she had now for many years been accustomed to submit. She regarded this influence as most venerable and sacred; no mortal power, no human consideration, could have prevented her from obeying it. Did any dispute arise on the subject, nothing could move her on this point; she opposed to every argument a resistance entirely free from passion—mild as her disposition, calm as her conscience—but, like the latter, not to be shaken. In a word, Frances Baudoin was one of those pure, but uninstructed and credulous beings, who may sometimes, in skilful and dangerous hands, become, without knowing it, the instruments of much evil.

For some time past, the bad state of her health, and particularly the increasing weakness of her sight, had condemned her to a forced repose; unable to work more than two or three hours a day, she consumed the rest of her time at church.

Frances rose from her seat, pushed the coarse bags at which she had been working to the further end of the table, and proceeded to lay the cloth for her son's supper, with maternal care and solicitude She took from the press a small leathern bag, containing an old silver cup, very much battered, and a fork and spoon, so worn and thin, that the latter cut like a knife. These, her only *plate* (the wedding present of Dagobert) she rubbed and polished as well as she was able, and laid by the side of her son's plate. They were the most precious of her possessions, not so much for what little intrinsic value might attach to them, as for the associa-

tions they recalled; and she had often shed bitter tears, when, under the pressure of illness or want of employment, she had been compelled to carry these sacred treasures to the pawnbroker's.

Frances next took, from the lower shelf of the press, a bottle of water, and one of wine about three-quarters full, which she also placed near her son's plate; she then returned to the stove, to watch the cooking of the supper.

Though Agricola was not much later than usual, the countenance of his mother expressed both uneasiness and grief; one might have seen, by the redness of her eyes, that she had been weeping a good deal. After long and painful uncertainty, the poor woman had just arrived at the conviction that her eyesight, which had been growing weaker and weaker, would soon be so much impaired as to prevent her working even the two or three hours a day which had lately been the extent of her labors.

Originally an excellent hand at her needle, she had been obliged, as her eyesight gradually failed her, to abandon the finer for the coarser sorts of work, and her earnings had necessarily diminished in proportion; she had at length been reduced to the necessity of making those coarse bags for the army, which took about four yards of sewing, and were paid at the rate of two sous each, she having to find her own thread. This work, being very hard, she could at most complete three such bags in a day, and her gains thus amounted to threepence (six sous)!

It makes one shudder to think of the great number of unhappy females, whose strength has been so much exhausted by privations, old age, or sickness, that all the labor of which they are capable, hardly suffices to bring them in daily this miserable pittance. Thus do their gains diminish in exact proportion to the increasing wants which age and infirmity must occasion.

Happily, Frances had an efficient support in her son. A first-rate workman, profiting by the just scale of wages adopted by M. Hardy, his labor brought him from four to five shillings a day—more than double what was gained by the workmen of many other establishments. Admitting therefore that his mother were to gain nothing, he could easily maintain both her and himself.

But the poor woman, so wonderfully economical that she denied herself even some of the necessaries of life, had of late become ruinously liberal on the score of the sacristy, since she had adopted the habit of visiting daily the parish

church. Scarcely a day passed but she had masses sung, or tapers burnt, either for Dagobert, from whom she had been so long separated, or for the salvation of her son Agricola, whom she considered on the high-road to perdition. Agricola had so excellent a heart, so loved and revered his mother, and considered her actions in this respect inspired by so touching a sentiment, that he never complained when he saw a great part of his week's wages (which he paid regularly over to his mother every Saturday) disappear in pious forms.

Yet now and then he ventured to remark to Frances, with as much respect as tenderness, that it pained him to see her enduring privations injurious at her age, because she preferred incurring these devotional expenses. But what answer could he make to this excellent mother, when she replied with tears: "My child, 'tis for the salvation of your father, and yours too."

To dispute the efficacy of masses, would have been venturing on a subject which Agricola, through respect for his mother's religious faith, never discussed. He contented himself, therefore, with seeing her dispense with comforts she might have enjoyed.

A discreet tap was heard at the door. "Come in," said Frances. The person came in.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SISTER OF THE BACCHANAL QUEEN.

The person who now entered was a girl of about eighteen, short, and very much deformed. Though not exactly a hunchback, her spine was curved; her breast was sunken, and her head deeply set in the shoulders. Her face was regular, but long, thin, very pale, and pitted with the small-pox; yet it expressed great sweetness and melancholy. Her blue eyes beamed with kindness and intelligence. By a strange freak of nature, the handsomest woman would have been proud of the magnificent hair twisted in a coarse net at the back of her head. She held an old basket in her hand. Though miserably clad, the care and neatness of her dress revealed a powerful struggle with her poverty. Notwithstanding the cold, she wore a scanty frock made of print

of an indefinable color, spotted with white; but it had been so often washed, that its primitive design and color had long since disappeared. In her resigned, yet suffering face, might be read a long familiarity with every form of suffering, every description of taunting. From her birth, ridicule had ever pursued her. We have said that she was very deformed, and she was vulgarly called "Mother Bunch." Indeed it was so usual to give her this grotesque name, which every moment reminded her of her infirmity, that Frances and Agricola, though they felt as much compassion as other people showed contempt for her, never called her, however, by any other name.

Mother Bunch, as we shall therefore call her in future, was born in the house in which Dagobert's wife had resided for more than twenty years; and she had, as it were, been brought up with Agricola and Gabriel.

There are wretches fatally doomed to misery. Mother Bunch had a very pretty sister, on whom Perrine Soliveau, their common mother, the widow of a ruined tradesman, had concentrated all her affection, while she treated her deformed child with contempt and unkindness. The latter would often come, weeping, to Frances, on this account, who tried to console her, and in the long evenings amused her by teaching her to read and sew. Accustomed to pity her by their mother's example, instead of imitating other children, who always taunted and sometimes even beat her, Agricola and Gabriel liked her, and used to protect and defend her.

She was about fifteen, and her sister Cephyse was about seventeen, when their mother died, leaving them both in utter poverty. Cephyse was intelligent, active, clever, but different to her sister; she had the lively, alert, hoydenish character which requires air, exercise and pleasures—a good girl enough, but foolishly spoiled by her mother. Cephyse, listening at first to Frances's good advice, resigned herself to her lot; and, having learnt to sew, worked like her sister, for about a year. But, unable to endure any longer the bitter privations her insignificant earnings, notwithstanding her incessant toil, exposed her to—privations which often bordered on starvation—Cephyse, young, pretty, of warm temperament, and surrounded by brilliant offers and seductions—brilliant, indeed, for her, since they offered food to satisfy her hunger, shelter from the cold, and decent raiment, without being obliged to work fifteen hours a day in an obscure and unwholesome hovel—Cephyse listened to the vows of a young lawyer's clerk, who forsook her soon

after. She formed a connection with another clerk, whom she (instructed by the examples set her), forsook in turn for a bagman, whom she afterwards cast off for other favorites. In a word, what with changing and being forsaken, Cephyse, in the course of one or two years, was the idol of a set of grisettes, students and clerks; and acquired such a reputation at the balls on the Hampstead Heaths of Paris, by her decision of character, original turn of mind, and unwearied ardor in all kinds of pleasures, and especially her wild, noisy gayety, that she was termed the Bacchanal Queen, and proved herself in every way worthy of this bewildering royalty.

From that time poor Mother Bunch only heard of her sister at rare intervals. She still mourned for her, and continued to toil hard to gain her three-and-six a week. The unfortunate girl, having been taught sewing by Frances, made coarse shirts for the common people and the army. For these she received half-a-crown a dozen. They had to be hemmed, stitched, provided with collars and wristbands, buttons, and button-holes; and at the most, when at work twelve and fifteen hours a day, she rarely succeeded in turning out more than fourteen or sixteen shirts a week—an excessive amount of toil that brought her in about three shillings and fourpence a week. And the case of this poor girl was neither accidental nor uncommon. And this, because the remuneration given for women's work is an example of revolting injustice and savage barbarism. They are paid not half as much as men who are employed at the needle: such as tailors, and makers of gloves, or waistcoats, etc.—no doubt because women can work as well as men—because they are more weak and delicate—and because their need may be twofold as great when they become mothers.

Well, Mother Bunch fagged on, with three-and-four a week. That is to say, toiling hard for twelve or fifteen hours every day, she succeeded in keeping herself alive, in spite of exposure to hunger, cold, and poverty—so numerous were her privations. Privations? No! The word privation expresses but weakly that constant and terrible want of all that is necessary to preserve the existence God gives; namely, wholesome air and shelter, sufficient and nourishing food and warm clothing. Mortification would be a better word to describe that total want of all that is essentially vital, which a justly organized state of society ought—yes—ought necessarily to bestow on every active, honest workman and workwoman, since civilization has dispos-

sessed them of all territorial right, and left them no other patrimony than their hands.

The savage does not enjoy the advantage of civilization; but he has, at least, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and the fruits of the earth, to feed him, and his native woods for shelter and for fuel. The civilized man, disinherited of these gifts, considering the rights of property as sacred, may, in return for his hard daily labor, which enriches his country, demand wages that will enable him to live in the enjoyment of health: nothing more, and nothing less. For is it living, to drag along on the extreme edge which separates life from the grave, and even there continually struggle against cold, hunger, and disease? And to show how far the mortification which society imposes thus inexorably on its millions of honest, industrious laborers (by its careless disregard of all the questions which concern the just remuneration of labor), may extend, we will describe how this poor girl contrived to live on three shillings and sixpence a week.

Society, perhaps, may then feel its obligation to so many unfortunate wretches for supporting, with resignation, the horrible existence which leaves them just sufficient life to feel the worst pangs of humanity. Yes: to live at such a price is virtue! Yes, society thus organized, whether it tolerates or imposes so much misery, loses all right to blame the poor wretches who sell themselves, not through debauchery, but because they are cold and famishing. This poor girl spent her wages as follows:—

Six pounds of bread, second quality	0	8½
Four pails of water	0	2
Lard or dripping (butter being out of the question)	0	5
Coarse salt	0	0¾
A bushel of charcoal	0	4
A quart of dried vegetables	0	3
Three quarts of potatoes	0	2
Dips	0	3¼
Thread and needles	0	2½
	2	7

To save charcoal, Mother Bunch prepared soup only two or three times a week at most, on a stove that stood on the landing of the fourth story. On other days she ate it cold. There remained nine or ten pence a week for clothes and lodging. By rare good fortune, her situation was in one respect an exception to the lot of many others. Agricola, that he might not wound her delicacy, had come to a secret

arrangement with the housekeeper, and hired a garret for her, just large enough to hold a small bed, a chair, and a table; for which the sempstress had to pay five shillings a year. But Agricola, in fulfilment of his agreement with the porter, paid the balance, to make up the actual rent of the garret, which was twelve and sixpence. The poor girl had thus about eighteenpence a month left for her other expenses. But many workwomen, whose position is less fortunate than hers, since they have neither home nor family, buy a piece of bread and some other food to keep them through the day; and at night patronize the "twopenny rope," one with another, in a wretched room containing five or six beds, some of which are always engaged by men, as male lodgers are by far the most abundant. Yes; and in spite of the disgust that a poor and virtuous girl must feel at this arrangement, she must submit to it; for a lodging-house keeper cannot have separate rooms for females. To furnish a room, however meanly, the poor workwoman must possess three or four shillings in ready money. But how save this sum, out of weekly earnings of a couple of florins, which are scarcely sufficient to keep her from starving, and are still less sufficient to clothe her? No! no! The poor wretch must resign herself to this repugnant cohabitation; and so, gradually, the instinct of modesty becomes weakened; the natural sentiment of chastity, that saved her from the "gay life," becomes extinct; vice appears to be the only means of improving her intolerable condition; she yields; and the first "man made of money," who can afford a governess for his children, cries out against the depravity of the lower orders! And yet, painful as the condition of the working woman is, it is relatively fortunate. Should work fail her for one day, two days, what then? Should sickness come—sickness almost always occasioned by unwholesome food, want of fresh air, necessary attention, and good rest; sickness, often so enervating as to render work impossible; though not so dangerous as to procure the sufferer a bed in an hospital—what becomes of the hapless wretches then? The mind hesitates, and shrinks from dwelling on such gloomy pictures.

This inadequacy of wages, one terrible source only of so many evils, and often of so many vices, is general, especially among women; and, again, this is not private wretchedness, but the wretchedness which afflicts whole classes, the type of which we endeavor to develop in Mother Bunch. It exhibits the moral and physical condition of thousands of human

creatures in Paris, obliged to subsist on a scanty four shillings a week. This poor workwoman, then, notwithstanding the advantages she unknowingly enjoyed through Agricola's generosity, lived very miserably: and her health, already shattered, was now wholly undermined by these constant hardships. Yet, with extreme delicacy, though ignorant of the little sacrifice already made for her by Agricola, Mother Bunch pretended she earned more than she really did, in order to avoid offers of service which it would have pained her to accept, because she knew the limited means of Frances and her son, and because it would have wounded her natural delicacy, rendered still more sensitive by so many sorrows and humiliations.

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But, singular as it may appear, this deformed body contained a loving and generous soul—a mind cultivated even to poetry; and let us add, that this was owing to the example of Agricola Baudoin, with whom she had been brought up, and who had naturally the gift. This poor girl was the first confidant to whom our young mechanic imparted his literary essays; and when he told her of the charm and extreme relief he found in poetic reverie, after a day of hard toil, the workwoman, gifted with strong natural intelligence, felt, in her turn, how great a resource this would be to her in her lonely and despised condition.

One day, to Agricola's great surprise, who had just read some verses to her, the sewing-girl, with smiles and blushes, timidly communicated to him also a poetic composition. Her verses wanted rhythm and harmony, perhaps; but they were simple and affecting, as a non-envenomed complaint entrusted to a friendly hearer. From that day Agricola and she held frequent consultations; they gave each other mutual encouragement: but with this exception, no one else knew anything of the girl's poetical essays, whose mild timidity made her often pass for a person of weak intellect. This soul must have been great and beautiful, for in all her unlettered strains there was not a word of murmuring respecting her hard lot: her note was sad, but gentle—desponding, but resigned; it was especially the language of deep tenderness—of mournful sympathy—of angelic charity for all poor creatures consigned, like her, to bear the double burden of poverty and deformity. Yet she often expressed a sincere free-spoken admiration of beauty, free from all envy or bitterness; she admired beauty as she admired the sun. But, alas! many were the verses of hers that Agricola had never seen, and which he was never to see.

The young mechanic, though not strictly handsome, had an open masculine face; was as courageous as kind; possessed a noble, glowing, generous heart, a superior mind, and a frank, pleasing gayety of spirits. The young girl, brought up with him, loved him as an unfortunate creature can love, who, dreading cruel ridicule, is obliged to hide her affection in the depths of her heart, and adopt reserve and deep dissimulation. She did not seek to combat her love; to what purpose should she do so? No one would ever know it. Her well known sisterly affection for Agricola explained the interest she took in all that concerned him; so that no one was surprised at the extreme grief of the young workwoman, when, in 1830, Agricola, after fighting intrepidly for the people's flag, was brought bleeding home to his mother. Dagobert's son, deceived, like others, on this point, had never suspected, and was destined never to suspect, this love for him.

Such was the poorly-clad girl who entered the room in which Frances was preparing her son's supper.

"Is it you, my poor love," said she; "I have not seen you since morning: have you been ill? Come and kiss me.'

The young girl kissed Agricola's mother, and replied: "I was very busy about some work, mother; I did not wish to lose a moment; I have only just finished it. I am going down to fetch some charcoal—do you want anything while I'm out?"

"No, no, my child, thank you. But I am very uneasy. It is half-past eight, and Agricola is not come home." Then she added, after a sigh: "He kills himself with work for me. Ah, I am very unhappy, my girl; my sight is quite going. In a quarter of an hour after I begin working, I cannot see at all—not even to sew sacks. The idea of being a burden to my son drives me distracted."

"Oh, don't, ma'am, if Agricola heard you say that——"

"I know the poor boy thinks of nothing but me, and that augments my vexation. Only I think that rather than leave me, he gives up the advantages that his fellow-workmen enjoy at Hardy's, his good and worthy master—instead of living in this dull garret, where it is scarcely light at noon, he would enjoy, like the other workmen, at very little expense, a good light room, warm in winter, airy in summer, with a view of the garden. And he is so fond of trees! not to mention that this place is so far from his work, that it is quite a toil to him to get to it."

"Oh, when he embraces you he forgets his fatigue, Mrs. Baudoin," said Mother Bunch; "besides, he knows how you

cling to the house in which he was born. M. Hardy offered to settle you at Plessy with Agricola, in the building put up for the workmen."

"Yes, my child; but then I must give up church. I can't do that."

"But,——be easy, I hear him," said the hunchback, blushing.

A sonorous, joyous voice was heard singing on the stairs.

"At least, I'll not let him see that I have been crying," said the good mother, drying her tears. "This is the only moment of rest and ease from toil he has—I must not make it sad to him."

CHAPTER XXIX.

AGRICOLA BAUDOIN.

Our blacksmith poet, a tall young man, about four-and-twenty years of age, was alert and robust, with ruddy complexion, dark hair and eyes, and aquiline nose, and an open, expressive countenance. His resemblance to Dagobert was rendered more striking by the thick brown moustache which he wore according to the fashion; and a sharp-pointed imperial covered his chin. His cheeks, however, were shaven. Olive color velveteen trousers, a blue blouse, bronzed by the forge smoke, a black cravat, tied carelessly round his muscular neck, a cloth cap with a narrow vizor, composed his dress. The only thing which contrasted singularly with his working habiliments was a handsome purple flower, with silvery pistils, which he held in his hand.

"Good-evening, mother," said he, as he came to kiss Frances immediately.

Then, with a friendly nod, he added, "Good-evening, Mother Bunch."

"You are very late, my child," said Frances, approaching the little stove on which her son's simple meal was simmering: "I was getting very anxious."

"Anxious about me, or about my supper, dear mother?" said Agricola, gayly: "The deuce! you won't excuse me for keeping the nice little supper waiting that you get ready for me, for fear it should be spoilt, eh?"

So saying, the blacksmith tried to kiss his mother again.

"Have done, you naughty boy; you'll make me upset the pan."

"That would be a pity, mother; for it smells delightfully. Let's see what it is."

"Wait half a moment."

"I'll swear, now, you have some of the fried potatoes and bacon I'm so fond of."

"Being Saturday, of course!" said Frances, in a tone of mild reproach.

"True," rejoined Agricola, exchanging a smile of innocent cunning with Mother Bunch; "but, talking of Saturday, mother, here are my wages."

"Thank ye, child; put the money in the cupboard."

"Yes, mother!"

"Oh, dear!" cried the young sempstress, just as Agricola was about to put away the money, "what a handsome flower you have in your hand, Agricola. I never saw a finer. In winter, too! Do look at it, Mrs. Baudoin."

"See there, mother," said Agricola, taking the flower to her; "look at it, admire it, and especially smell it. You can't have a sweeter perfume; a blending of vanilla and orange blossom."

"Indeed, it does smell nice, child. Goodness! how handsome!" said Frances, admiringly; "where did you find it?"

"Find it, my good mother!" repeated Agricola, smilingly: "do you think folks pick up such things between the Barrière du Maine and the Rue Brise-Miche?"

"How did you get it then?" inquired the sewing girl, sharing in Frances's curiosity.

"Oh! you would like to know? Well, I'll satisfy you, and explain why I came home so late; for something else detained me. It has been an evening of adventures, I promise you. I was hurrying home, when I heard a low, gentle barking at the corner of the Rue de Babylone; it was just about dusk, and I could see a very pretty little dog, scarce bigger than my fist, black and tan, with long, silky hair, and ears that covered its paws."

"Lost, poor thing, I warrant," said Frances.

"You've hit it. I took up the poor thing, and it began to lick my hands. Round its neck was a red satin ribbon, tied in a large bow; but as that did not bear the master's name, I looked beneath it, and saw a small collar, made of a gold plate and small gold chains. So I took a lucifer match from my 'bacco-box, and striking a light, I read, 'FRISKY belongs to Hon. Miss Adrienne de Cardoville, No. 7, Rue de Babylone.'"

"Why, you were just in the street," said Mother Bunch.

"Just so. Taking the little animal under my arm, I looked about me till I came to a long garden wall, which seemed to have no end, and found a small door of a summer-house, belonging no doubt to the large mansion at the other end of the park; for this garden looked just like a park. So, looking up, I saw 'No. 7,' newly painted over a little door with a grated slide. I rang; and in a few minutes, spent, no doubt, in observing me through the bars (for I am sure I saw a pair of eyes peeping through), the gate opened. And now, you'll not believe a word I have to say."

"Why not, my child?"

"Because it seems like a fairy tale."

"A fairy tale?" said Mother Bunch, as if she was really her namesake of elfish history.

"For all the world it does. I am quite astounded, even now, at my adventure; it is like the remembrance of a dream."

"Well, let us have it," said the worthy mother, so deeply interested that she did not perceive her son's supper was beginning to burn.

"First," said the blacksmith, smiling at the curiosity he had excited, "a young lady opened the door to me, but so lovely, so beautifully and gracefully dressed, that you would have taken her for a beautiful portrait of past times. Before I could say a word, she exclaimed, 'Ah! dear me, sir, you have brought back Frisky; how happy Miss Adrienne will be! Come, pray come in instantly; she would so regret not having an opportunity to thank you in person!' And without giving me time to reply, she beckoned me to follow her. Oh, dear mother, it is quite out of my power to tell you all the magnificence I saw, as I passed through a small saloon, partially lighted, and full of perfume! It would be impossible. The young woman walked too quickly. A door opened,—Oh, such a sight! I was so dazzled I can remember nothing but a great glare of gold and light, crystal and flowers; and, amidst all this brilliancy, a young lady of extreme beauty—ideal beauty; but she had red hair, or rather hair shining like gold! Oh! it was charming to look at! I never saw such hair before. She had black eyes, ruddy lips, and her skin seemed white as snow. This is all I can recollect: for, as I said before, I was so dazzled, I seemed to be looking through a veil. 'Madame,' said the young woman, whom I never should have taken for a lady's maid, she was dressed so elegantly, 'here is Frisky. This gentleman found him, and brought him back.' 'Oh, sir,' said the young

lady with the golden hair, in a sweet silvery voice, 'what thanks I owe you! I am foolishly attached to Frisky.' Then, no doubt, concluding from my dress that she ought to thank me in some other way than by words, she took up a silk purse, and said to me, though I must confess with some hesitation—'No doubt, sir, it gave you some trouble to bring my pet back. You have, perhaps, lost some valuable time—allow me——' She held forth her purse."

"Oh, Agricola," said Mother Bunch, sadly; "how people may be deceived!"

"Hear the end, and you will perhaps forgive the young lady. Seeing by my looks that the offer of the purse hurt me, she took a magnificent porcelain vase that contained this flower, and, addressing me in a tone full of grace and kindness, that left me room to guess that she was vexed at having wounded me, she said—'At least, sir, you will accept this flower.'"

"You are right, Agricola," said the girl, smiling sadly, "an involuntary error could not be repaired in a nicer way."

"Worthy young lady," said Frances, wiping her eyes; "how well she understood my Agricola!"

"Did she not, mother? But just as I was taking the flower, without daring to raise my eyes (for, notwithstanding the young lady's kind manner, there was something very imposing about her) another handsome girl, tall and dark, and dressed to the top of fashion, came in and said to the red-haired young lady, 'He is here, Madame.' She immediately rose and said to me, 'A thousand pardons, sir. I shall never forget that I am indebted to you for a moment of much pleasure. Pray remember, on all occasions, my address and name—Adrienne de Cardoville.' Thereupon she disappeared. I could not find a word to say in reply. The same young woman showed me to the door, and curtseyed to me very politely. And there I stood in the Rue de Babylone, as dazzled and astonished as if I had come out of an enchanted palace."

"Indeed, my child, it is like a fairy tale. Is it not, my poor girl?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Mother Bunch, in an absent manner that Agricola did not observe.

"What affected me most," rejoined Agricola, "was, that the young lady, on seeing her little dog, did not forget me for it, as many would have done in her place, and took no notice of it before me. That shows delicacy and feeling, does it not? Indeed, I believe this young lady to be so kind and

generous, that I should not hesitate to have recourse to her in any important case."

"Yes, you are right," replied the sempstress, more and more absent.

The poor girl suffered extremely. She felt no jealousy, no hatred, towards this young stranger, who, from her beauty, wealth, and delicacy, seemed to belong to a sphere too splendid and elevated to be even within the reach of a work-girl's vision; but, making an involuntary comparison of this fortunate condition with her own, the poor thing had never felt more cruelly her deformity and poverty. Yet such were the humility and gentle resignation of this noble creature, that the only thing which made her feel ill-disposed towards Adrienne de Cardoville was the offer of the purse to Agricola; but then the charming way in which the young lady had atoned for her error, affected the sempstress deeply. Yet her heart was ready to break. She could not restrain her tears as she contemplated the magnificent flower—so rich in color and perfume, which, given by a charming hand, was doubtless very precious to Agricola.

"Now, mother," resumed the young man smilingly, and unaware of the painful emotion of the other bystander, "you have had the cream of my adventures first. I have told you one of the causes of my delay; and now for the other. Just now, as I was coming in, I met the dyer at the foot of the stairs, his arms a beautiful pea-green. Stopping me he said, with an air full of importance, that he thought he had seen a chap sneaking about the house like a spy. 'Well, what is that to you, Daddy Loriot?' said I: 'are you afraid he will nose out the way to make the beautiful green, with which you are dyed up to the very elbows?'"

"But who could that man be, Agricola?" said Frances.

"On my word, mother, I don't know and scarcely care; I tried to persuade Daddy Loriot, who chatters like a magpie, to return to his cellar, since it could signify as little to him as to me, whether a spy watched him or not." So saying, Agricola went and placed the little leathern sack, containing his wages, on a shelf, in the cupboard.

As Frances put down the saucepan on the end of the table, Mother Bunch, recovering from her reverie, filled a basin with water, and, taking it to the blacksmith, said to him in a gentle tone—

"Agricola—for your hands."

"Thank you, little sister. How kind you are!" Then

with a most unaffected gesture and tone, he added, "There is my fine flower for your trouble."

"Do you give it me?" cried the sempstress, with emotion, while a vivid blush colored her pale and interesting face. "Do you give me this handsome flower, which a lovely rich young lady so kindly and graciously gave you?" And the poor thing repeated, with growing astonishment, "Do you give it to me?"

"What the deuce should I do with it? Wear it on my heart, have it set as a pin?" said Agricola, smiling. "It is true I was very much impressed by the charming way in which the young lady thanked me. I am delighted to think I found her little dog, and very happy to be able to give you this flower, since it pleases you. You see the day has been a happy one."

While Mother Bunch, trembling with pleasure, emotion, and surprise, took the flower, the young blacksmith washed his hands, so black with smoke and steel filings that the water became dark in an instant. Agricola, pointing out this change to the sempstress, said to her in a whisper, laughing,—

"Here's cheap ink for us paper-stainers! I finished some verses yesterday, which I am rather satisfied with. I will read them to you."

With this, Agricola wiped his hands naturally on the front of his blouse, while Mother Bunch replaced the basin on the chest of drawers, and laid the flower against the side of it.

"Can't you ask for a towel," said Frances, shrugging her shoulders, "instead of wiping your hands on your blouse?"

"After being scorched all day long at the forge, it will be all the better for a little cooling to-night, won't it? Am I disobedient, mother? Scold me, then, if you dare! Come, let us see you."

Frances made no reply; but, placing her hands on either side of her son's head, so beautiful in its candor, resolution and intelligence, she surveyed him for a moment with maternal pride, and kissed him repeatedly on the forehead.

"Come," said she, "sit down: you stand all day at your forge, and it is late."

"So, — your arm-chair again!" said Agricola.——"Our usual quarrel every evening—take it away, I shall be quite as much at ease on another."

"No, no! You ought at least to rest after your hard toil."

"What tyranny!" said Agricola gayly, sitting down.

"Well, I preach like a good apostle; but I am quite at ease in your arm-chair, after all. Since I sat down on the throne in the Tuileries, I have never had a better seat."

Frances Baudoin, standing on one side of the table, cut a slice of bread for her son, while Mother Bunch, on the other, filled his silver mug. There was something affecting in the attentive eagerness of the two excellent creatures, for him whom they loved so tenderly.

"Won't you sup with me?" said Agricola to the girl.

"Thank you, Agricola," replied the sempstress, looking down, "I have only just dined."

"Oh, I only ask you for form's sake—you have your whims—we can never prevail on you to eat with us—just like mother; she prefers dining all alone; and in that way she deprives herself without my knowing it."

"Goodness, child! It is better for my health to dine early. Well, do you find it nice?"

"Nice!—call it excellent! Stockfish and parsnips. Oh, I am very fond of stockfish; I should have been born a Newfoundland fisherman."

This worthy lad, on the contrary, was but poorly refreshed, after a hard day's toil, with this paltry stew,—a little burnt as it had been, too, during his story; but he knew he pleased his mother by observing the fast without complaining. He affected to enjoy his meal; and the good woman accordingly observed with satisfaction:

"Oh, I see you like it, my dear boy; Friday and Saturday next we'll have some more."

"Thank you, mother,—only not two days together. One gets tired of luxuries, you know! And now, let us talk of what we shall do to-morrow—Sunday. We must be very merry, for the last few days you seem very sad, dear mother, and I can't make it out—I fancy you are not satisfied with me."

"Oh, my dear child!—you—the pattern of——"

"Well, well! Prove to me that you are happy, then, by taking a little amusement. Perhaps you will do us the honor of accompanying us, as you did last time," added Agricola, bowing to Mother Bunch.

The latter blushed and looked down; her face assumed an expression of bitter grief, and she made no reply.

"I have the prayers to attend all day, you know, my dear child," said Frances to her son.

"Well, in the evening, then? I don't propose the theatre; but they say there is a conjurer to be seen whose tricks are very amusing."

"I am obliged to you, my son; but that is a kind of theatre."

"Dear mother, this is unreasonable!"

"My dear child, do I ever hinder others from doing what they like?"

"True, dear mother; forgive me. Well, then, if it should be fine, we will simply take a walk with Mother Bunch on the Boulevards. It is nearly three months since she went out with us; and she never goes out without us."

"No, no; go alone, my child. Enjoy your Sunday, 'tis little enough."

"You know very well, Agricola," said the sempstress, blushing up to the eyes, "that I ought not to go out with you and your mother again."

"Why not, madame? May I ask, without impropriety, the cause of this refusal?" said Agricola, gayly.

The poor girl smiled sadly, and replied, "Because I will not expose you to a quarrel on my account, Agricola."

"Forgive me," said Agricola, in a tone of sincere grief, and he struck his forehead vexedly.

To this Mother Bunch alluded sometimes, but very rarely, for she observed punctilious discretion. The girl had gone out with Agricola and his mother. Such occasions were, indeed, holidays for her. Many days and nights had she toiled hard to procure a decent bonnet and shawl, that she might not do discredit to her friends. The five or six days of holidays, thus spent arm in arm with him whom she adored in secret, formed the sum of her happy days.

Taking their last walk, a coarse, vulgar man elbowed her so rudely that the poor girl could not refrain from a cry of terror, and the man retorted it by saying,—

"What are you rolling your hump in my way for, stoopid?"

Agricola, like his father, had the patience which force and courage give to the truly brave; but he was extremely quick when it became necessary to avenge an insult. Irritated at the vulgarity of this man, Agricola left his mother's arm to inflict on the brute, who was of his own age, size, and force, two vigorous blows, such as the powerful arm and huge fist of a blacksmith never before inflicted on human face. The villain attempted to return it, and Agricola repeated the correction, to the amusement of the crowd, and the fellow slunk away amidst a deluge of hisses. This adventure made Mother Bunch say she would not go out with Agricola again, in order to save him any occasion of

quarrel. We may conceive the blacksmith's regret at having thus unwittingly revived the memory of this circumstance, more painful, alas! for Mother Bunch than Agricola could imagine, for she loved him passionately, and her infirmity had been the cause of that quarrel. Notwithstanding his strength and resolution, Agricola was childishly sensitive; and, thinking how painful that thought must be to the poor girl, a large tear filled his eyes, and, holding out his hands, he said, in a brotherly tone, "Forgive my heedlessness! Come, kiss me." And he gave her thin, pale cheeks two hearty kisses.

The poor girl's lips turned pale at this cordial caress; and her heart beat so violently that she was obliged to lean against the corner of the table.

"Come, you forgive me, do you not?" said Agricola.

"Yes! yes!" she said, trying to subdue her emotion; "but the recollection of that quarrel pains me—I was so alarmed on your account; if the crowd had sided with that man!"

"Alas!" said Frances, coming to the sewing-girl's relief, without knowing it, "I was never so afraid in all my life!"

"Oh, mother," rejoined Agricola, trying to change a conversation which had now become disagreeable for the sempstress, "for the wife of a horse grenadier of the Imperial Guard, you have not much courage. "Oh, my brave father; I can't believe he is really coming! The very thought turns me topsy-turvy!"

"Heaven grant he may come," said Frances, with a sigh.

"God grant it, mother. He will grant it, I should think. Lord knows, you have had masses enough said for his return."

"Agricola, my child," said Frances, interrupting her son, and shaking her head sadly, "do not speak in that way. Besides, you are talking of your father."

"Well, I'm in for it this evening. 'Tis your turn now; positively, I am growing stupid, or going crazy. Forgive me, mother! forgive! That's the only word I can get out to-night. You know that, when I do let out on certain subjects, it is because I can't help it; for I know well the pain it gives you."

"You do not offend me, my poor, dear, misguided boy."

"It comes to the same thing; and there is nothing so bad as to offend one's mother; and, with respect to what I said about father's return, I do not see that we have any cause to doubt it."

"But we have not heard from him for four months."

"You know, mother, in his letter—that is, in the letter which he dictated (for you remember that, with the candor of an old soldier, he told us that, if he could read tolerably well, he could not write); well, in that letter he said we were not to be anxious about him; that he expected to be in Paris about the end of January, and would send us word, three or four days before, by what road he expected to arrive, that I might go and meet him."

"True, my child; and February is come, and no news yet."

"The greater reason why we should wait patiently. But I'll tell you more: I should not be surprised if our good Gabriel were to come back about the same time. His last letter from America makes me hope so. What pleasure, mother, should all the family be together!"

"Oh, yes, my child! It would be a happy day for me."

"And that day will soon come, trust me."

"Do you remember your father, Agricola?" inquired Mother Bunch.

"To tell the truth, I remember most his great grenadier's shako and moustache, which used to frighten me so, that nothing but the red ribbon of his cross of honor, on the white facings of his uniform, and the shining handle of his sabre, could pacify me; could it, mother? But what is the matter? You are weeping!"

"Alas! poor Baudoin! What he must suffer at being separated from us at his age—sixty and past! Alas! my child, my heart breaks, when I think that he comes home only to change one kind of poverty for another."

"What do you mean?"

"Alas! I earn nothing now."

"Why, what's become of me? Isn't there a room here for you and for him; and a table for you too? Only, my good mother, since we are talking of domestic affairs," added the blacksmith, imparting increased tenderness to his tone, that he might not shock his mother, "when he and Gabriel come home, you won't want to have any more masses said, and tapers burned for them, will you? Well, that saving will enable father to have tobacco to smoke, and his bottle of wine every day. Then, on Sundays, we will take a nice dinner at the eating-house."

A knocking at the door disturbed Agricola.

"Come in," said he. Instead of doing so, some one half-opened the door, and, thrusting in an arm of a pea green color, made signs to the blacksmith.

"'Tis old Loriot, the pattern of dyers," said Agricola; "come in, Daddy, no ceremony."

"Impossible, my lad; I am dripping with dye from head to foot; I should cover missus's floor with green."

"So much the better. It will remind me of the fields I like so much."

"Without joking, Agricola, I must speak to you immediately."

"About the spy, eh? Oh, be easy; what's he to us?"

"No; I think he's gone; at any rate, the fog is so thick I can't see him. But that's not it—come, come quickly! It is very important," said the dyer, with a mysterious look; "and only concerns you."

"Me, only?" said Agricola, with surprise. "What can it be?"

"Go and see, my child," said Frances.

"Yes, mother; but the deuce take me if I can make it out."

And the blacksmith left the room, leaving his mother with Mother Bunch.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RETURN.

In five minutes Agricola returned; his face was pale and agitated—his eyes glistened with tears, and his hands trembled; but his countenance expressed extraordinary happiness and emotion. He stood at the door for a moment, as if too much affected to accost his mother.

Frances's sight was so bad that she did not immediately perceive the change her son's countenance had undergone.

"Well, my child—what is it?" she inquired.

Before the blacksmith could reply, Mother Bunch, who had more discernment, exclaimed: "Goodness, Agricola—how pale you are! Whatever is the matter?"

"Mother," said the artisan, hastening to Frances, without replying to the sempstress,—"mother, expect news that will astonish you; but promise me you will be calm."

"What do you mean? How you tremble! Look at me! Mother Bunch was right—you are quite pale."

"My kind mother!" and Agricola, kneeling before Frances, took both her hands in his—"you must—you do not know,—but——"

The blacksmith could not go on. Tears of joy interrupted his speech.

"You weep, my dear child! Your tears alarm me! What is the matter?—you terrify me!"

"Oh, no, I would not terrify you; on the contrary," said Agricola, drying his eyes—"you will be so happy. But, again, you must try and command your feelings, for too much joy is as hurtful as too much grief."

"What?"

"Did I not say true, when I said he would come?"

"Father!" cried Frances. She rose from her seat; but her surprise and emotion were so great that she put one hand to her heart to still its beating, and then she felt her strength fail. Her son sustained her, and assisted her to sit down.

Mother Bunch, till now, had stood discreetly apart, witnessing from a distance the scene which completely engrossed Agricola and his mother. But she now drew near timidly, thinking she might be useful; for Frances changed color more and more.

"Come, courage, mother," said the blacksmith; "now the shock is over, you have only to enjoy the pleasure of seeing my father."

"My poor man! after eighteen years' absence. Oh, I cannot believe it," said Frances, bursting into tears. "Is it true? Is it, indeed, true?"

"So true, that if you will promise me to keep as calm as you can, I will tell you when you may see him."

"Soon—may I not?"

"Yes; soon."

"But when will he arrive?"

"He may arrive any minute—to-morrow—perhaps to-day."

"To-day!"

"Yes, mother! Well, I must tell you all—he has arrived."

"He—he is——" Frances could not articulate the word.

"He was downstairs just now. Before coming up, he sent the dyer to apprise me that I might prepare you; for my brave father feared the surprise might hurt you."

"Oh, heaven!"

"And now," cried the blacksmith, in an accent of indescribable joy—"he is there, waiting! Oh, mother! for the last ten minutes I have scarcely been able to contain myself—my heart is bursting with joy." And running to the door, he threw it open.

Dagobert, holding Rose and Blanche by the hand, stood on the threshold. Instead of rushing to her husband's arms, Frances fell on her knees in prayer. She thanked heaven with profound gratitude for hearing her prayers, and thus accepting her offerings. During a second, the actors of this scene stood silent and motionless. Agricola, by a sentiment of respect and delicacy, which struggled violently with his affection, did not dare to fall on his father's neck. He waited with constrained impatience till his mother had finished her prayer.

The soldier experienced the same feeling as the blacksmith; they understood each other. The first glance exchanged by father and son expressed their affection—their veneration for that excellent woman, who in the fulness of her religious fervor, forgot, perhaps, too much the creature for the Creator.

Rose and Blanche, confused and affected, looked with interest on the kneeling woman; while Mother Bunch, shedding in silence tears of joy at the thought of Agricola's happiness, withdrew into the most obscure corner of the room, feeling that she was a stranger, and necessarily out of place in that family meeting. Frances rose, and took a step towards her husband, who received her in his arms. There was a moment of solemn silence. Dagobert and Frances said not a word. Nothing could be heard but a few sighs, mingled with sighs of joy. And, when the aged couple looked up, their expression was calm, radiant, serene; for the full and complete enjoyment of simple and pure sentiments never leaves behind a feverish and violent agitation.

"My children," said the soldier, in tones of emotion, presenting the orphans to Frances, who, after her first agitation, had surveyed them with astonishment, "this is my good and worthy wife; she will be to the daughters of General Simon what I have been to them."

"Then, madame, you will treat us as your children," said Rose, approaching Frances with her sister.

"The daughters of General Simon!" cried Dagobert's wife, more and more astonished.

"Yes, my dear Frances; I have brought them from afar—not without some difficulty; but I will tell you that by and by."

"Poor little things! One would take them for two angels, exactly alike!" said Frances, contemplating the orphans with as much interest as admiration.

"Now—for us," cried Dagobert, turning to his son.

"At last," rejoined the latter.

We must renounce all attempts to describe the wild joy of Dagobert and his son, and the crushing grip of their hands, which Dagobert interrupted only to look in Agricola's face; while he rested his hands on the young blacksmith's broad shoulders that he might see to more advantage his frank masculine countenance, and robust frame. Then he shook his hand again, exclaiming, "He's a fine fellow—well built—what a good-hearted look he has!"

From a corner of the room Mother Bunch enjoyed Agricola's happiness; but she feared that her presence, till then unheeded, would be an intrusion. She wished to withdraw unnoticed, but could not do so. Dagobert and his son were between her and the door; and she stood unable to take her eyes from the charming faces of Rose and Blanche. She had never seen anything so winsome; and the extraordinary resemblance of the sisters increased her surprise. Then, their humble mourning revealing that they were poor, Mother Bunch involuntarily felt more sympathy towards them.

"Dear children! They are cold; their little hands are frozen, and, unfortunately, the fire is out," said Frances. She tried to warm the orphans' hands in hers, while Dagobert and his son gave themselves up to the feelings of affection, so long restrained.

As soon as Frances said that the fire was out, Mother Bunch hastened to make herself useful, as an excuse for her presence; and, going to the cupboard, where the charcoal and wood were kept, she took some small pieces, and, kneeling before the stove, succeeded, by the aid of a few embers that remained, in relighting the fire, which soon began to draw and blaze. Filling a coffee-pot with water, she placed it on the stove, presuming that the orphans required some warm drink. The sempstress did all this with so much dexterity and so little noise—she was naturally so forgotten amidst the emotions of the scene—that Frances, entirely occupied with Rose and Blanche, only perceived the fire when she felt its warmth diffusing round, and heard the boiling water singing in the coffee-pot. This phenomenon—fire rekindling of itself—did not astonish Dagobert's wife then, so wholly was she taken up in devising how she could lodge the maidens; for Dagobert, as we have seen, had not given her notice of their arrival.

Suddenly a loud bark was heard three or four times at the door.

"Hallo! there's Spoil-sport," said Dagobert, letting in his dog; "he wants to come in to brush acquaintance with the family too."

The dog came in with a bound, and in a second was quite at home. After having rubbed Dagobert's hand with his muzzle, he went in turns to greet Rose and Blanche, and also Frances and Agricola; but seeing that they took but little notice of him, he perceived Mother Bunch, who stood apart, in an obscure corner of the room, and carrying out the popular saying, "the friends of our friends are our friends," he went and licked the hands of the young workwoman, who was just then forgotten by all. By a singular impulse, this action affected the girl to tears; she patted her long, thin, white hand several times on the head of the intelligent dog. Then, finding that she could be no longer useful (for she had done all the little services she deemed in her power), she took the handsome flower Agricola had given her, opened the door gently, and went away so discreetly that no one noticed her departure. After this exchange of mutual affection, Dagobert, his wife, and son, began to think of the realities of life.

"Poor Frances," said the soldier, glancing at Rose and Blanche, "you did not expect such a pretty surprise!"

"I am only sorry, my friend," replied Frances, "that the daughters of General Simon will not have a better lodging than this poor room; for with Agricola's garret——"

"It composes our mansion," interrupted Dagobert; "there are handsomer, it must be confessed. But be at ease; these young ladies are drilled into not being hard to suit on that score. To-morrow, I and my boy will go arm and arm, and I'll answer for it he won't walk the more upright and straight of the two, and find out General Simon's father, at M. Hardy's factory, to talk about business."

"To-morrow, father," said Agricola to Dagobert, "you will not find at the factory either M. Hardy or Marshal Simon's father."

"What is that you say, my lad?" cried Dagobert, hastily, "the Marshal!"

"To be sure; since 1830, General Simon's friends have secured him the title and rank which the emperor gave him at the battle of Ligny."

"Indeed!" cried Dagobert, with emotion, "but that ought not to surprise me; for, after all, it is just; and when the emperor said a thing, the least they can do is to let it abide. But it goes all the same to my heart; it makes me jump again."

Addressing the sisters, he said: "Do you hear that, my children? You arrive in Paris the daughters of a Duke and Marshal of France. One would hardly think it, indeed, to see you in this room, my poor little duchesses! But patience; all will go well. Ah, father Simon must have been very glad to hear that his son was restored to his rank! eh, my lad?"

"He told us he would renounce all kinds of ranks and titles to see his son again; for it was during the general's absence that his friends obtained this act of justice. But they expect Marshal Simon every moment, for the last letter from India announced his departure."

At these words Rose and Blanche looked at each other; and their eyes filled with tears.

"Heaven be praised! These children rely on his return; but why shall we not find M. Hardy and father Simon at the factory to-morrow?"

"Ten days ago, they went to examine and study an English mill established in the south; but we expect them back every day."

"The deuce! that's vexing; I relied on seeing the general's father, to talk over some important matters with him. At any rate, they know where to write to him. So to morrow you will let him know, my lad, that his granddaughters are arrived. In the mean time, children," added the soldier, to Rose and Blanche, "my good wife will give you her bed, and you must put up with the chances of war. Poor things! they will not be worse off here than they were on the journey."

"You know we shall always be well off with you and madame," said Rose.

"Besides, we only think of the pleasure of being at length in Paris, since here we are to find our father," added Blanche.

"That hope gives you patience, I know," said Dagobert, "but no matter! After all you have heard about it, you ought to be finely surprised, my children. As yet, you have not found it the golden city of your dreams, by any means. But, patience, patience; you'll find Paris not so bad as it looks."

"Besides," said Agricola, "I am sure the arrival of Marshal Simon in Paris will change it for you into a golden city."

"You are right, Agricola," said Rose, with a smile, "you have, indeed, guessed us."

"What! do you know my name?"

"Certainly, Agricola, we often talked about you with Dagobert; and latterly, too, with Gabriel," added Blanche.

"Gabriel!" cried Agricola and his mother, at the same time.

"Yes," replied Dagobert, making a sign of intelligence to the orphans, "we have lots to tell you for a fortnight to come; and among other things, how we chanced to meet with Gabriel. All I can now say is that, in his way, he is quite as good as my boy (I shall never be tired of saying 'my boy'); and they ought to love each other like brothers. Oh, my brave, brave wife!" said Dagobert, with emotion, "you did a good thing, poor as you were, taking the unfortunate child—and bringing him up with your own."

"Don't talk so much about it, my dear; it was such a simple thing."

"You are right; but I'll make you amends for it by and by. 'Tis down to your account; in the mean time, you will be sure to see him to-morrow morning."

"My dear brother arrived too!" cried the blacksmith; "who'll say, after this, that there are not days set apart for happiness? How came you to meet him, father?"

"I'll tell you all, by and by, about when and how we met Gabriel; for if you expect to sleep, you are mistaken. You'll give me half your room, and a fine chat we'll have. Spoilsport will stay outside of this door; he is accustomed to sleep at the children's door."

"Dear me, love, I think of nothing. But, at such a moment, if you and the young ladies wish to sup, Agricola will fetch something from the cookshop."

"What do you say, children?"

"No, thank you, Dagobert, we are not hungry; we are too happy."

"You will take a little wine and water, sweetened, nice and hot, to warm you a little, my dear young ladies," said Frances; "unfortunately, I have nothing else to offer you."

"You are right, Frances; the dear children are tired, and want to go to bed; while they do so, I'll go to my boy's room, and, before Rose and Blanche are awake, I will come down and converse with you, just to give Agricola a respite."

A knock was now heard at the door.

"It is good Mother Bunch come to see if we want her," said Agricola.

"But I think she was here when my husband came in," added Frances.

"Right, mother; and the good girl left lest she should be an intruder: she is so thoughtful. But no—no—it is not she who knocks so loud."

"Go and see who it is, then, Agricola."

Before the blacksmith could reach the door, a man, decently dressed, with a respectable air, entered the room, and glanced rapidly round, looking for a moment at Rose and Blanche.

"Allow me to observe, sir," said Agricola, "that after knocking, you might have waited till the door was opened, before you entered. Pray, what is your business?"

"Pray excuse me, sir," said the man, very politely, and speaking slowly, perhaps to prolong his stay in the room: "I beg a thousand pardons—I regret my intrusion—I am ashamed——"

"Well, you ought to be, sir," said Agricola, with impatience, "what do you want?"

"Pray, sir, does not Miss Soliveau, a deformed needle-woman, live here?"

"No, sir; upstairs," said Agricola.

"Really, sir," cried the polite man, with low bows, "I am quite abroad at my blunder: I thought this was the room of that young person. I brought her proposals for work from a very respectable party."

"It is very late, sir," said Agricola, with surprise. "But that young person is as one of our family. Call to-morrow; you cannot see her to-night; she is gone to bed."

"Then, sir, I again beg you to excuse——"

"Enough, sir," said Agricola, taking a step towards the door.

"I hope, madame and the young ladies, as well as this gent, will be assured that——"

"If you go on much longer making excuses, sir, you will have to excuse the length of your excuses; and it is time this came to an end!"

Rose and Blanche smiled at these words of Agricola; while Dagobert rubbed his moustache with pride.

"What wit the boy has!" said he aside to his wife. "But that does not astonish you—you are used to it."

During this speech, the ceremonious person withdrew, having again directed a long inquiring glance to the sisters, and to Agricola, and Dagobert.

In a few minutes after, Frances having spread a mattress on the ground for herself, and put the whitest sheets on her bed for the orphans, assisted them to undress with maternal

solicitude, Dagobert and Agricola having previously withdrawn to their garret. Just as the blacksmith, who preceded his father with a light, passed before the door of Mother Bunch's room, the latter, half concealed in the shade, said to him rapidly, in a low tone:

"Agricola, great danger threatens you: I must speak to you."

These words were uttered in so hasty and low a voice, that Dagobert did not hear them; but as Agricola stopped suddenly, with a start, the old soldier said to him,—

"Well, boy, what is it?"

"Nothing, father," said the blacksmith, turning round; "I feared I did not light you well."

"Oh, stand at ease about that: I have the legs and eyes of fifteen to-night;" and the soldier, not noticing his son's surprise, went into the little room where they were both to pass the night.

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On leaving the house, after his inquiries about Mother Bunch, the over-polite Paul Pry slunk along to the end of Brise-Miche Street. He advanced towards a hackney-coach drawn up on the Cloître Saint-Méry Square.

In this carriage lounged Rodin, wrapped in a cloak.

"Well?" said he, in an inquiring tone.

"The two girls and the man with gray moustache went directly to Frances Baudoin's; by listening at the door, I learnt that the sisters will sleep with her, in that room, to-night; the old man with gray moustache will share the young blacksmith's room."

"Very well," said Rodin.

"I did not dare insist on seeing the deformed workwoman this evening on the subject of the Bacchanal Queen; I intend returning to-morrow, to learn the effect of the letter she must have received this evening by the post about the young blacksmith."

"Do not fail! And now you will call, for me, on Frances Baudoin's confessor, late as it is; you will tell him that I am waiting for him at Rue du Milieu des Ursins—he must not lose a moment. Do you come with him. Should I not be returned, he will wait for me. You will tell him it is on a matter of great moment."

"All shall be faithfully executed," said the ceremonious man, cringing to Rodin, as the coach drove quickly away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AGRICOLA AND MOTHER BUNCH.

WITHIN one hour after the different scenes which have just been described the most profound silence reigned in the soldier's humble dwelling. A flickering light, which played through two panes of glass in a door, betrayed that Mother Bunch had not yet gone to sleep; for her gloomy recess, without air or light, was impenetrable to the rays of day, except by this door, opening upon a narrow and obscure passage, connected with the roof. A sorry bed, a table, an old portmanteau, and a chair, so nearly filled this chilling abode, that two persons could not possibly be seated within it, unless one of them sat upon the side of the bed.

The magnificent and precious flower that Agricola had given to the girl was carefully stood up in a vessel of water, placed upon the table on a linen cloth, diffusing its sweet odor around, and expanding its purple calix in the very closet, whose plastered walls, gray and damp, were feebly lighted by the rays of an attenuated candle. The sempstress, who had taken off no part of her dress, was seated upon her bed—her looks were downcast, and her eyes full of tears. She supported herself with one hand resting on the bolster; and, inclining towards the door, listened with painful eagerness, every instant hoping to hear the footsteps of Agricola. The heart of the young sempstress beat violently; her face, usually very pale, was now partially flushed,—so exciting was the emotion by which she was agitated. Sometimes she cast her eyes with terror upon a letter which she held in her hand, a letter that had been delivered by post in the course of the evening, and which had been placed by the housekeeper (the dyer) upon the table, while she was rendering some trivial domestic services during the recognitions of Dagobert and his family.

After some seconds, Mother Bunch heard a door, very near her own, softly opened.

"There he is at last!" she exclaimed, and Agricola immediately entered.

"I waited till my father went to sleep," said the blacksmith, in a low voice, his physiognomy evincing much more

curiosity than uneasiness. "But what is the matter, my good sister? How your countenance is changed! You weep! What has happened? About what danger would you speak to me?"

"Hush! Read this!" said she, her voice trembling with emotion, while she hastily presented to him the open letter. Agricola held it towards the light, and read what follows:

"A person who has reasons for concealing himself, but who knows the sisterly interest you take in the welfare of Agricola Baudoin, warns you. That young and worthy workman will probably be arrested in the course of to-morrow."

"I!" exclaimed Agricola, looking at Mother Bunch with an air of stupefied amazement. "What is the meaning of all this?"

"Read on!" quickly replied the sempstress, clasping her hands.

Agricola resumed reading, scarcely believing the evidence of his eyes:—

"The song, entitled 'Working-men Freed,' has been declared libellous. Numerous copies of it have been found among the papers of a secret society, the leaders of which are about to be incarcerated, as being concerned in the Rue des Prouvaires conspiracy."

"Alas!" said the girl, melting into tears, "now I see it all. The man who was lurking about below, this evening, who was observed by the dyer, was, doubtless, a spy, lying in wait for you coming home."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Agricola. "This accusation is quite ridiculous! Do not torment yourself. I never trouble myself with politics. My verses breathe nothing but philanthropy. Am I to blame, if they have been found among the papers of a secret society?" Agricola disdainfully threw the letter upon the table.

"Read! pray read!" said the other; "read on."

"If you wish it," said Agricola, "I will; no time is lost." He resumed the reading of the letter:

"A warrant is about to be issued against Agricola Baudoin. There is no doubt of his innocence being sooner or later made clear; but it will be well if he screen himself for a time as much as possible from pursuit, in order that he may escape a confinement of two or three months previous to trial—an imprisonment which would be a terrible blow for his mother, whose sole support he is.

"A SINCERE FRIEND, who is compelled to remain unknown."

After a moment's silence, the blacksmith raised his head; his countenance resumed its serenity; and laughing, he

said: "Reassure yourself, good Mother Bunch, these jokers have made a mistake by trying their games on me. It is plainly an attempt at making an April-fool of me before the time."

"Agricola, for the love of heaven!" said the girl, in a supplicating tone; "treat not the warning thus lightly. Believe in my forebodings, and listen to my advice."

"I tell you again, my good girl," replied Agricola, "that it is two months since my song was published. It is not in any way political; indeed, if it were, they would not have waited till now before coming down on me."

"But," said the other, "you forget that new events have arisen. It is scarcely two days since the conspiracy was discovered, in this very neighborhood, in the Rue des Prouvaires. "And," continued she, "if the verses, though perhaps hitherto unnoticed, have now been found in the possession of the persons apprehended for this conspiracy, nothing more is necessary to compromise you in the plot."

"Compromise me!" said Agricola; "my verses! in which I only praise the love of labor and of goodness! To arrest me for that! If so, justice would be but a blind noodle. That she might grope her way, it would be necessary to furnish her with a dog and a pilgrim's staff to guide her steps."

"Agricola," resumed Mother Bunch, overwhelmed with anxiety and terror on hearing the blacksmith jest at such a moment, "I conjure you to listen to me! No doubt you uphold in the verses the sacred love of labor; but you do also grievously deplore and deprecate the unjust lot of the poor laborers, devoted as they are, without hope, to all the miseries of life; you recommend, indeed, only fraternity among men; but your good and noble heart vents its indignation, at the same time, against the selfish and the wicked. In fine, you fervently hasten on, with the ardor of your wishes, the emancipation of all the artisans who, less fortunate than you, have not generous M. Hardy for employer. Say, Agricola, in these times of trouble, is there anything more necessary to compromise you than that numerous copies of your song have been found in possession of the persons who have been apprehended?"

Agricola was moved by these affectionate and judicious expressions of an excellent creature, who reasoned from her heart; and he began to view with more seriousness the advice which she had given him.

Perceiving that she had shaken him, the sewing-girl went

on to say: "And then, bear your fellow-workman, Remi, in recollection."

"Remi!" said Agricola, anxiously.

"Yes," resumed the sempstress; "a letter of his, a letter in itself quite insignificant, was found in the house of a person arrested last year for conspiracy; and Remi, in consequence, remained a month in prison."

"That is true, but the injustice of his implication was easily shown, and he was set at liberty."

"Yes, Agricola: but not till he had lain a month in prison; and that has furnished the motive of the person who advised you to conceal yourself! A month in prison! Good heavens! Agricola, think of that! and your mother."

These words made a powerful impression upon Agricola. He took up the letter and again read it attentively.

"And the man who has been lurking all this evening about the house?" proceeded she. "I constantly recall that circumstance, which cannot be naturally accounted for. Alas! what a blow it would be for your father, and poor mother, who is incapable of earning anything. Are you not now their only resource? Oh! consider, then, what would become of them without you—without your labor!"

"It would indeed be terrible," said Agricola, impatiently casting the letter upon the table! "What you have said concerning Remi is too true. He was as innocent as I am: yet an error of justice, an involuntary error though it be, is not the less cruel. But they don't commit a man without hearing him."

"But they arrest him first, and hear him afterwards," said Mother Bunch, bitterly; "and then, after a month or two, they restore him his liberty. And if he have a wife and children, whose only means of living is his daily labor, what becomes of them while their only supporter is in prison? They suffer hunger, they endure cold, and they weep!"

At these simple and pathetic words, Agricola trembled.

"A month without work," he said, with a sad and thoughtful air. "And my mother, and father, and the two young ladies who make part of our family until the arrival in Paris of their father, Marshal Simon. Oh! you are right. That thought, in spite of myself, affrights me!"

"Agricola!" exclaimed the girl impetuously; "suppose you apply to M. Hardy; he is so good, and his character is so much esteemed and honored, that, if he offered bail for you, perhaps they would give up their persecution?"

"Unfortunately," replied Agricola, "M Hardy is absent; he is on a journey with Marshal Simon."

After a silence of some time, Agricola, striving to surmount his fears, added: "But no! I cannot give credence to this letter. After all, I had rather await what may come. I'll at least have the chance of proving my innocence on my first examination: for indeed, my good sister, whether it be that I am in prison, or that I fly to conceal myself, my working for my family will be equally prevented."

"Alas! that is true," said the poor girl; "what is to be done! Oh, what is to be done?"

"My brave father," said Agricola to himself, "if this misfortune happen to-morrow, what an awakening it will be for him, who came here to sleep so joyously!" The blacksmith buried his face in his hands.

Unhappily Mother Bunch's fears were too well-founded, for it will be recollected that at that epoch of the year 1832, before and after the Rue des Prouvaires conspiracy, a very great number of arrests had been made among the working classes, in consequence of a violent reaction against democratical ideas.

Suddenly, the girl broke the silence which had been maintained for some seconds. A blush colored her features, which bore the impressions of an indefinable expression of constraint, grief, and hope.

"Agricola, you are saved!"

"What say you?" he asked.

"The young lady, so beautiful, so good, who gave you this flower" (she showed it to the blacksmith) "who has known how to make reparation with so much delicacy for having made a painful offer, cannot but have a generous heart. You must apply to her——"

With these words which seemed to be wrung from her by a violent effort over herself, great tears rolled down her cheeks. For the first time in her life she experienced a feeling of grievous jealousy. Another woman was so happy as to have the power of coming to the relief of him whom she idolized; while she herself, poor creature, was powerless and wretched.

"Do you think so?" exclaimed Agricola surprised. "But what could be done with this young lady?"

"Did she not say to you," answered Mother Bunch, "'Remember my name; and in all circumstances address yourself to me?'"

"She did indeed!" replied Agricola.

"This young lady, in her exalted position, ought to have powerful connections who will be able to protect and defend you. Go to her to-morrow morning; tell her frankly what has happened, and request her support."

"But tell me, my good sister, what it is you wish me to do?"

"Listen. I remember that, in former times, my father told us that he had saved one of his friends from being put in prison, by becoming surety for him. It will be easy for you so to convince this young lady of your innocence, that she will be induced to become surety; and after that, you will have nothing more to fear."

"My poor child!" said Agricola, "to ask so great a service from a person to whom one is almost unknown is hard."

"Believe me, Agricola," said the other sadly, "I would never counsel what could possibly lower you in the eyes of any one, and above all—do you understand?—above all, in the eyes of this young lady. I do not propose that you should ask money from her; but only that she should give surety for you, in order that you may have the liberty of continuing at your employment, so that the family may not be without resources. Believe me, Agricola, that such a request is in no respect inconsistent with what is noble and becoming upon your part. The heart of the young lady is generous. She will comprehend your position. The required surety will be as nothing to her; while to you it will be everything, and will even be the very life to those who depend upon you."

"You are right, my good sister," said Agricola, with sadness and dejection. "It is perhaps worth while to risk taking this step. If the young lady consent to render me this service, and if giving surety will indeed preserve me from prison, I shall be prepared for every event. But no, no!" added he, rising, "I'd never dare to make the request to her! What right have I to do so? What is the insignificant service that I rendered her, when compared with that which I should solicit from her."

"Do you imagine then, Agricola, that a generous spirit measures the services which ought to be rendered, by those previously received? Trust to me respecting a matter which is an affair of the heart. I am, it is true, but a lowly creature, and ought not to compare myself with any other person. I am nothing, and I can do nothing. Nevertheless, I am sure—yes, Agricola, I am sure—that this young lady, who is so very far above me, will experience the same feelings that I do in this affair; yes, like me, she will at once

comprehend that your position is a cruel one; and she will do with joy, with happiness, with thankfulness, that which I would do, if, alas! I could do anything more than uselessly consume myself with regrets."

In spite of herself, she pronounced the last words with an expression so heart-breaking—there was something so moving in the comparison which this unfortunate creature, obscure and disdained, infirm and miserable, made of herself with Adrienne de Cardoville, the very type of resplendent youth, beauty, and opulence—that Agricola was moved even to tears; and, holding out one of his hands to the speaker, he said to her, tenderly, "How very good you are; how full of nobleness, good feeling, and delicacy!"

"Unhappily," said the weeping girl, "I can do nothing more than advise."

"And your counsels shall be followed out, my sister dear. They are those of a soul the most elevated I have ever known. Yes, you have won me over into making this experiment, by persuading me that the heart of Miss de Cardoville is perhaps equal in value to your own!"

At this charming and sincere assimilation of herself to Miss Adrienne, the sempstress forgot almost everything she had suffered, so exquisitely sweet and consoling were her emotions. If some poor creatures, fatally devoted to sufferings, experience griefs of which the world knows naught, they sometimes, too, are cheered by humble and timid joys, of which the world is equally ignorant. The least word of true tenderness and affection, which elevates them in their own estimation, is ineffably blissful for these unfortunate beings, habitually consigned, not only to hardships and to disdain, but even to desolating doubts, and distrust of themselves.

"Then it is agreed that you will go, to-morrow morning, to this young lady's house?" exclaimed Mother Bunch, trembling with a new-born hope. "And," she quickly added, "at break of day I'll go down to watch at the street-door, to see if there be anything suspicious, and to apprise you of what I perceive."

"Good, excellent girl!" exclaimed Agricola, with increasing emotion.

"It will be necessary to endeavor to set off before the wakening of your father," said the hunchback. "The quarter in which the young lady dwells, is so deserted, that the mere going there will almost serve for your present concealment."

"I think I hear the voice of my father," said Agricola suddenly.

In truth, the little apartment was so near Agricola's garret, that he and the sempstress, listening, heard Dagobert say in the dark:

"Agricola, is it thus that you sleep, my boy? Why, my first sleep is over; and my tongue itches deucedly."

"Go quick, Agricola!" said Mother Bunch; "your absence would disquiet him. On no account go out to-morrow morning, before I inform you whether or not I shall have seen anything suspicious."

"Why, Agricola, you are not here?" resumed Dagobert, in a louder voice.

"Here I am, father," said the smith, while going out of the sempstress's apartment, and entering the garret, to his father.

"I have been to fasten the shutter of a loft that the wind agitated, lest its noise should disturb you."

"Thanks, my boy; but it is not noise that wakes me," said Dagobert, gayly; "it is an appetite, quite furious, for a chat with you. Oh, my dear boy, it is the hungering of a proud old man of a father, who has not seen his son for eighteen years."

"Shall I light a candle, father?"

"No, no; that would be luxurious; let us chat in the dark. It will be a new pleasure for me to see you to-morrow morning at daybreak. It will be like seeing you for the first time twice." The door of Agricola's garret being now closed, Mother Bunch heard nothing more.

The poor girl, without undressing, threw herself upon the bed, and closed not an eye during the night, painfully awaiting the appearance of day, in order that she might watch over the safety of Agricola. However, in spite of her vivid anxieties for the morrow, she sometimes allowed herself to sink into the reveries of a bitter melancholy. She compared the conversation she had just had in the silence of night, with the man whom she secretly adored, with what that conversation might have been, had she possessed some share of charms and beauty—had she been loved as she loved, with a chaste and devoted flame! But soon sinking into belief that she should never know the ravishing sweets of a mutual passion, she found consolation in the hope of being useful to Agricola. At the dawn of day, she rose softly, and descended the staircase with little noise, in order to see if anything menaced Agricola from without.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE AWAKENING.

The weather, damp and foggy during a portion of the night, became clear and cold towards morning. Through the glazed skylight of Agricola's garret, where he lay with his father, a corner of the blue sky could be seen.

The apartment of the young blacksmith had an aspect as poor as the sewing-girl's. For its sole ornament, over the deal table upon which Agricola wrote his poetical inspirations, there hung suspended from a nail in the wall a portrait of Beranger—that immortal poet whom the people revere and cherish, because his rare and transcendent genius has delighted to enlighten the people, and to sing their glories and their reverses.

Although the day had only begun to dawn, Dagobert and Agricola had already risen. The latter had sufficient self-command to conceal his inquietude, for renewed reflection had again increased his fears.

The recent outbreak in the Rue des Prouvaires had caused a great number of precautionary arrests; and the discovery of numerous copies of Agricola's song, in the possession of one of the chiefs of the disconcerted plot, was, in truth, calculated slightly to compromise the young blacksmith. His father, however, as we have already mentioned, suspected not his secret anguish. Seated by the side of his son, upon the edge of their mean little bed, the old soldier, by break of day, had dressed and shaved with military care; he now held between his hands both those of Agricola, his countenance radiant with joy, and unable to discontinue the contemplation of his boy.

"You will laugh at me, my dear boy," said Dagobert to his son; "but I wished the night to the devil, in order that I might gaze upon you in full day, as I now see you. But all in good time; I have lost nothing. Here is another silliness of mine; it delights me to see you wear moustaches. What a splendid horse-grenadier you would have made! Tell me; have you never had a wish to be a soldier?"

"I thought of mother!"

"That's right," said Dagobert: "and besides, I believe,

after all, look ye, that the time of the sword has gone by. We old fellows are now good for nothing, but to be put in a corner of the chimney. Like rusty old carbines, we have had our day."

"Yes; your days of heroism and of glory," said Agricola with excitement; and then he added, with a voice profoundly softened and agitated, "it is something good and cheering to be your son!"

"As to the good, I know nothing of that," replied Dagobert; "but as for the cheering, it ought to be so; for I love you proudly. And I think this is but the beginning! What say you, Agricola? I am like the famished wretches who have been some days without food. It is but by little and little that they recover themselves, and can eat. Now, you may be expect to be tasted, my boy, morning and evening, and devoured during the day. No, I wish not to think that —not all the day—no, that thought dazzles and perplexes me; and I am no longer myself."

These words of Dagobert caused a painful feeling to Agricola. He believed that they sprang from a presentiment of the separation with which he was menaced.

"Well," continued Dagobert; "you are quite happy; M. Hardy is always good to you."

"Oh!" replied Agricola: "there is none in the world better, or more equitable and generous! If you knew what wonders he has brought about in his factory! Compared to all others, it is a paradise beside the stithies of Lucifer!"

"Indeed!" said Dagobert.

"You shall see," resumed Agricola, "what welfare, what joy, what affection, are displayed upon the countenances of all whom he employs; who work with an ardent pleasure."

"This M. Hardy of yours must be an out-and-out magician," said Dagobert.

"He is, father, a very great magician. He has known how to render labor pleasant and attractive. As for the pleasure, over and above good wages, he accords to us a portion of his profits according to our deserts; whence you may judge of the eagerness with which we go to work. And that is not all: he has caused large, handsome buildings to be erected, in which all his workpeople find, at less expense than elsewhere, cheerful and salubrious lodgings, in which they enjoy all the advantages of an association. But you shall see—I repeat—you shall see!",

"They have good reason to say, that Paris is the region of wonders," observed Dagobert.

"Well, behold me here again at last, never more to quit you, nor good mother!"

"No, father, we will never separate again," said Agricola, stifling a sigh. "My mother and I will both try to make you forget all that you have suffered."

"Suffered!" exclaimed Dagobert, "who the deuce has suffered? Look me well in the face; and see if I have a look of suffering! Bombs and bayonets! Since I have put my foot here, I feel myself quite a young man again! You shall see me march soon: I bet that I tire you out! You must rig yourself up something extra! Lord, how they will stare at us! I wager that in beholding your black moustache and my gray one, folks will say, behold father and son! But let us settle what we are to do with the day. You will write to the father of Marshal Simon, informing him that his grand-daughters have arrived, and that it is necessary that he should hasten his return to Paris; for he has charged himself with matters which are of great importance for them. While you are writing, I will go down to say good-morning to my wife, and to the dear little ones. We will then eat a morsel. Your mother will go to mass; for I perceive that she likes to be regular at that: the good soul! no great harm, if it amuse her! and during her absence, we will make a raid together."

"Father," said Agricola, with embarrassment, "this morning it is out of my power to accompany you."

"How! out of your power?" said Dagobert; "recollect this is Monday!"

"Yes, father," said Agricola, hesitatingly; "but I have promised to attend all the morning in the workshop, to finish a job that is required in a hurry. If I fail to do so, I shall inflict some injury upon M. Hardy. But I'll soon be at liberty."

"That alters the case," said Dagobert, with a sigh of regret. "I thought to make my first parade through Paris with you this morning; but it must be deferred in favor of your work. It is sacred: since it is that which sustains your mother. Nevertheless, it is vexatious, devilish vexatious. And yet no—I am unjust. See how quickly one gets habituated to and spoilt by happiness. I growl like a true grumbler, at a walk being put off for a few hours! I do this! I who, during eighteen years, have only hoped to see you once more, without daring to reckon very much upon it! Oh! I am but a silly old fool! Vive l'amour et cogni—I mean—my Agricola!" And, to console himself, the old soldier gayly slapped his son's shoulder.

This seemed another omen of evil to the blacksmith; for he dreaded one moment to another lest the fears of Mother Bunch should be realized. "Now that I have recovered myself," said Dagobert, laughing, "let us speak of business. Know you where I find the addresses of all the notaries in Paris?"

"I don't know; but nothing is more easy than to discover it."

"My reason is," resumed Dagobert, "that I sent from Russia by post, and by order of the mother of the two children that I have brought here, some important papers to a Parisian notary. As it was my duty to see this notary immediately upon my arrival, I had written his name and his address in a portfolio, of which, however, I have been robbed during my journey; and as I have forgotten his devil of a name, it seems to me, that if I should see it again in the list of notaries, I might recollect it."

Two knocks at the door of the garret made Agricola start. He involuntarily thought of a warrant for his apprehension.

His father, who, at the sound of the knocking turned round his head, had not perceived his emotion, and said with a loud voice: "Come in!" The door opened. It was Gabriel. He wore a black cassock and a broad-brimmed hat.

To recognize his brother by adoption, and to throw himself into his arms, were two movements performed at once by Agricola—as quick as thought.—"My brother!" exclaimed Agricola.

"Agricola!" cried Gabriel.

"Gabriel!" responded the blacksmith.

"After so long an absence!" said the one.

"To behold you again!" rejoined the other.

Such were the words exchanged between the blacksmith and the missionary, while they were locked in a close embrace.

Dagobert, moved and charmed by these fraternal endearments, felt his eyes become moist. There was something truly touching in the affection of the young men—in their hearts so much alike, and yet of characters and aspects so very different—for the manly countenance of Agricola contrasted strongly with the delicacy and angelic physiognomy of Gabriel.

"I was forewarned by my father of your arrival," said the blacksmith, at length. "I have been expecting to see you; and my happiness has been a hundred times the greater, because I have had all the pleasures of hoping for it."

"And my good mother?" asked Gabriel, in affectionately grasping the hands of Dagobert. "I trust that you have found her in good health."

"Yes, my brave boy!" replied Dagobert; "and her health will have become a hundred times better, now that we are all together. Nothing is so healthful as joy." Then addressing himself to Agricola, who, forgetting his fear of being arrested, regarded the missionary with an expression of ineffable affection, Dagobert added:

"Let it be remembered, that, with the soft cheek of a young girl, Gabriel has the courage of a lion; I have already told with what intrepidity he saved the lives of Marshal Simon's daughters, and tried to save mine also."

"But, Gabriel! what has happened to your forehead?" suddenly exclaimed Agricola, who for a few seconds had been attentively examining the missionary.

Gabriel, having thrown aside his hat on entering, was now directly beneath the skylight of the garret apartment, the bright light through which shone upon his sweet, pale countenance: and the round scar, which extended from one eyebrow to the other, was therefore distinctly visible.

In the midst of the powerful and diversified emotions, and of the exciting events which so rapidly followed the shipwreck on the rocky coast near Cardoville House, Dagobert, during the short interview he then had with Gabriel, had not perceived the scar which seamed the forehead of the young missionary. Now, partaking, however, of the surprise of his son, Dagobert said:

"Aye, indeed! how came this scar upon your brow?"

"And on his hands, too; see, dear father!" exclaimed the blacksmith, with renewed surprise, while he seized one of the hands which the young priest held out towards him in order to tranquillize his fears.

"Gabriel, my brave boy, explain this to us!" added Dagobert; "who has wounded you thus?" and in his turn, taking the other hand of the missionary, he examined the scar upon it with the eye of a judge of wounds, and then added, "In Spain, one of my comrades was found and taken down alive from a cross, erected at the junction of several roads, upon which the monks had crucified, and left him to die of hunger, thirst, and agony. Ever afterwards he bore scars upon his hands, exactly similar to this upon your hand."

"My father is right!" exclaimed Agricola. "It is evident that your hands have been pierced through! My poor brother!" and Agricola became grievously agitated.

"Do not think about it," said Gabriel, reddening with the embarrassment of modesty. "Having gone as a missionary amongst the savages of the Rocky Mountains, they crucified me, and they had begun to scalp me, when Providence snatched me from their hands."

"Unfortunate youth," said Dagobert; "without arms, then? You had not a sufficient escort for your protection?"

"It is not for such as me to carry arms," said Gabriel, sweetly smiling; "and we are never accompanied by any escort."

"Well, but your companions, those who were along with you, how came it that they did not defend you?" impetuously asked Agricola.

"I was alone, my dear brother."

"Alone!"

"Yes, alone; without even a guide."

"You alone! unarmed! in a barbarous country!" exclaimed Dagobert, scarcely crediting a step so unmilitary, and almost distrusting his own sense of hearing.

"It was sublime!" said the young blacksmith and poet.

"The Christian faith," said Gabriel, with mild simplicity, "cannot be implanted by force or violence. It is only by the power of persuasion that the gospel can be spread amongst poor savages."

"But when persuasions fail!" said Agricola.

"Why, then, dear brother, one has but to die for the belief that is in him, pitying those who have rejected it, and who have refused the blessings it offers to mankind."

There was a period of profound silence after the reply of Gabriel, which was uttered with simple and touching pathos.

Dagobert was in his own nature too courageous not to comprehend a heroism thus calm and resigned; and the old soldier, as well as his son, now contemplated Gabriel with the most earnest feelings of mingled admiration and respect.

Gabriel, entirely free from the affectation of false modesty, seemed quite unconscious of the emotions which he had excited in the breasts of his two friends; and he therefore said to Dagobert, "What ails you?"

"What ails me!" exclaimed the brave old soldier, with great emotion: "After having been for thirty years in the wars, I had imagined myself to be about as courageous as any man. And now I find I have a master! And that master is yourself!"

"I!" said Gabriel; "what do you mean? What have I done?"

"Thunder, don't you know that the brave wounds there" (the veteran took with transport both of Gabriel's hands), "that these wounds are as glorious,—are more glorious,—than ours,—than all ours, as warriors by profession!"

"Yes! yes! my father speaks truth!" exclaimed Agricola; and he added, with enthusiasm, "Oh, for such priests! How I love them! How I venerate them! How I am elevated by their charity, their courage, their resignation!"

"I entreat you not to extol me thus," said Gabriel with embarrassment.

"Not extol you!" replied Dagobert. "Hanged if I shouldn't. When I have gone into the heat of action, did I rush into it alone? Was I not under the eyes of my commanding officer? Were not my comrades there along with me? In default of true courage, had I not the instinct of self-preservation to spur me on, without reckoning the excitement of the shouts and tumult of battle, the smell of the gunpowder, the flourishes of the trumpets, the thundering of the cannon, the ardor of my horse, which bounded beneath me as if the devil were at his tail? Need I state that I also knew that the emperor was present, with his eye upon every one—the emperor, who, in recompense for a hole being made in my tough hide, would give me a bit of lace or a ribbon, as plaster for the wound. Thanks to all these causes, I passed for game. Fair enough! But are you not a thousand times more game than I, my brave boy; going alone, unarmed, to confront enemies a hundred times more ferocious than those whom we attacked,—we, who fought in whole squadrons, supported by artillery, bomb-shells, and case-shot?"

"Excellent father!" cried Agricola, "how noble of you to render to Gabriel this justice!"

"Oh, dear brother," said Gabriel, "his kindness to me makes him magnify what was quite natural and simple!"

"Natural!" said the veteran soldier; "yes, natural for gallants who have hearts of the true temper: but that temper is rare."

"Oh, yes, very rare," said Agricola; "for that kind of courage is the most admirable of all. Most bravely did you seek almost certain death, alone, bearing the cross in hand as your only weapon, to preach charity and Christian brotherhood. They seized you, tortured you; and you await death and partly endure it, without complaint, without remonstrance, without hatred, without anger, without a wish for vengeance; forgiveness issuing from your mouth,

and a smile of pity beaming upon your lips; and this in the depths of forests, where no one could witness your magnanimity,—none could behold you,—and without other desire, after you were rescued than modestly to conceal blessed wounds under your black robe! My father is right, by Jove! can you still contend that you are not as brave as he?"

"And besides, too," resumed Dagobert, "the dear boy did all that for a thankless paymaster; for it is true, Agricola, that his wounds will never change his humble black robe of a priest into the rich robe of a bishop!"

"I am not so disinterested as I may seem to be," said Gabriel to Dagobert, smiling meekly. "If I am deemed worthy, a great recompense awaits me on high."

"As to all that, my boy," said Dagobert, "I do not understand it; and I will not argue about it. I maintain it, that my old cross of honor would be at least as deservedly affixed to your cassock as upon my uniform."

"But these recompenses are never conferred upon humble priests like Gabriel," said Agricola, "and if you did know, dear father, how much virtue and valor is among those whom the highest orders in the priesthood insolently call the inferior clergy,—the unseen merit and the blind devotedness to be found amongst worthy, but obscure, country curates, who are inhumanly treated and subjugated to a pitiless yoke by the lordly lawnsleeves! Like us, those poor priests are worthy laborers in their vocation; and for them, also, all generous hearts ought to demand enfranchisement! Sons of common people, like ourselves, and useful as we are, justice ought to be rendered both to them and to us. Do I say right, Gabriel? You will not contradict it; for you have told me, that your ambition would have been to obtain a small country curacy; because you understand the good that you could work within it."

"My desire is still the same," said Gabriel sadly: "but unfortunately——" and then, as if he wished to escape from a painful thought, and to change the conversation, he, addressing himself to Dagobert, added: "Believe me: be more just than to undervalue your own courage by exalting mine. Your courage must be very great—very great; for, after a battle, the spectacle of the carnage must be truly terrible to a generous and feeling heart. We, at least, though we may be killed, do not kill."

At these words of the missionary, the soldier drew himself up erect, looked upon Gabriel with astonishment, and said, "This is most surprising!"

"What is?" inquired Agricola.

"What Gabriel has just told us," replied Dagobert, "brings to my mind what I experienced in warfare on the battle-field in proportion as I advanced in years. Listen, my children: more than once, on the night after a general engagement, I have been mounted as a vidette,—alone,—by night,—amid the moonlight, on the field of battle which remained in our possession, and upon which lay the bodies of seven or eight thousand of the slain, amongst whom were mingled the slaughtered remains of some of my old comrades: and then this sad scene, when the profound silence has restored me to my senses from the thirst for bloodshed and the delirious whirling of my sword (intoxicated like the rest), I have said to myself, "for what have these men been killed?—FOR WHAT—FOR WHAT?" But this feeling, well understood as it was, hindered me not, on the following morning, when the trumpets again sounded the charge, from rushing once more to the slaughter. But the same thought always recurred when my arm became weary with carnage; and after wiping my sabre upon the mane of my horse, I have said to myself, 'I have killed!—killed!!—killed!!! and, FOR WHAT!!!'"

The missionary and the blacksmith exchanged looks on hearing the old soldier give utterance to this singular retrospection of the past.

"Alas!" said Gabriel to him, "all generous hearts feel as you did during the solemn moments, when the intoxication of glory has subsided, and man is left alone to the influence of the good instincts planted in his bosom."

"And that should prove, my brave boy," rejoined Dagobert, "that you are greatly better than I: for those noble instincts, as you call them, have never abandoned you. * * * * But how the deuce did you escape from the claws of the infuriated savages who had already crucified you?"

At this question of Dagobert, Gabriel started and reddened so visibly, that the soldier said to him: "If you ought not or cannot answer my request, let us say no more about it."

"I have nothing to conceal, either from you or from my brother," replied the missionary with altered voice. "Only, it will be difficult for me to make you comprehend what I cannot comprehend myself."

"How is that?" asked Agricola with surprise.

"Surely," said Gabriel, reddening more deeply, "I must have been deceived by a fallacy of my senses, during that

abstracted moment in which I awaited death with resignation. My enfeebled mind, in spite of me, must have been cheated by an illusion; or that, which to the present hour has remained inexplicable, would have been more slowly developed; and I should have known with greater certainty that it was the strange woman——"

Dagobert, while listening to the missionary, was perfectly amazed; for he also had vainly tried to account for the unexpected succor which had freed him and the two orphans from the prison at Leipsic.

"Of what woman do you speak?" asked Agricola.

"Of her who saved me," was the reply.

"A woman saved you from the hands of the savages?" said Dagobert.

"Yes," replied Gabriel, though absorbed in his reflections, "a woman, young and beautiful!"

"And who was this woman?" asked Agricola.

"I know not. When I asked her, she replied, 'I am the sister of the distressed!'"

"And whence came she? Whither went she?" asked Dagobert, singularly interested.

"'I go wheresoever there is suffering,' she replied," answered the missionary; "and she departed, going towards the north of America,—towards those desolate regions in which there is eternal snow, where the nights are without end."

"As in Siberia," said Dagobert, who had become very thoughtful.

"But," resumed Agricola, addressing himself to Gabriel, who seemed also to have become more and more absorbed, "in what manner or by what means did this woman come to your assistance?"

* * * * * * *

The missionary was about to reply to the last question, when there was heard a gentle tap at the door of the garret apartment, which renewed the fears that Agricola had forgotten since the arrival of his adopted brother. "Agricola," said a sweet voice outside the door, "I wish to speak with you as soon as possible."

The blacksmith recognized Mother Bunch's voice, and opened the door. But the young sempstress, instead of entering, drew back into the dark passage, and said, with a voice of anxiety: "Agricola, it is an hour since broad day, and you have not yet departed! How imprudent! I have been watching below, in the street, until now, and have seen

nothing alarming; but they may come any instant to arrest you. Hasten, I conjure you, your departure for the abode of Miss de Cardoville. Not a minute should be lost."

"Had it not been for the arrival of Gabriel, I should have been gone. But I could not resist the happiness of remaining some little time with him."

"Gabriel here!" said Mother Bunch, with sweet surprise; for, as has been stated, she had been brought up with him and Agricola.

"Yes," answered Agricola, "for half an hour he has been with my father and me."

"What happiness I shall have in seeing him again," said the sewing-girl. "He doubtless came upstairs while I had gone for a brief space to your mother, to ask if I could be useful in any way on account of the young ladies; but they have been so fatigued that they still sleep. Your mother has requested me to give you this letter for your father. She has just received it."

"Thanks."

"Well," resumed Mother Bunch, "now that you have seen Gabriel, do not delay long. Think what a blow it would be for your father, if they came to arrest you in his very presence—*mon Dieu!*"

"You are right," said Agricola; "it is indispensable that I should depart—while near Gabriel, in spite of my anxiety, my fears were forgotten."

"Go quickly, then; and if Miss de Cardoville should grant this favor, perhaps in a couple of hours you will return, quite at ease both as to yourself and us."

"True! a very few minutes more; and I'll come down."

"I return to watch at the door. If I perceive anything, I'll come up again to apprise you. But, pray, do not delay."

"Be easy, good sister." Mother Bunch hurriedly descended the staircase, to resume her watch at the street door, and Agricola re-entered his garret. "Dear father," he said to Dagobert, "my mother has just received this letter, and she requests you to read it."

"Very well; read it for me, my boy." And Agricola read as follows:

"MADAME,—I understand that your husband has been charged by General Simon with an affair of very great importance. Will you, as soon as your husband arrives in Paris, request him to come to my office at Chartres without a moment's delay. I am instructed to deliver to himself, and to no other person, some documents indispensable to the interests of General Simon.

"DURAND, Notary at Chartres."

Dagobert looked at his son with astonishment, and said to him, "Who can have told this gentleman already of my arrival in Paris?"

"Perhaps, father," said Agricola, "this is the notary to whom you transmitted some papers, and whose address you have lost."

"But his name was not Durand; and I distinctly recollect that his address was Paris, not Chartres. And, besides," said the soldier, thoughtfully, "if he has some important documents, why didn't he transmit them to me?"

"It seems to me that you ought not to neglect going to him as soon as possible," said Agricola, secretly rejoiced that this circumstance would withdraw his father for about two days, during which time his (Agricola's) fate would be decided in one way or other.

"Your counsel is good," replied his father.

"This thwarts your intentions in some degree?" asked Gabriel.

"Rather, my lads; for I counted upon passing the day with you. However, 'duty before everything.' Having come happily from Siberia to Paris, it is not for me to fear a journey from Paris to Chartres, when it is required on an affair of importance. In twice twenty-four hours I shall be back again. But the deuce take me if I expected to leave Paris for Chartres to-day. Luckily, I leave Rose and Blanche with my good wife; and Gabriel, their angel, as they call him, will be here to keep them company."

"That is, unfortunately, impossible," said the missionary, sadly. "This visit on my arrival is also a farewell visit."

"A farewell visit! Now!" exclaimed Dagobert and Agricola both at once.

"Alas, yes!"

"You start already on another mission?" said Dagobert; "surely it is not possible?"

"I must answer no question upon this subject," said Gabriel, suppressing a sigh; "but from now, for some time, I cannot, and ought not, come again into this house."

"Why, my brave boy," resumed Dagobert with emotion, "there is something in thy conduct that savors of constraint, of oppression. I know something of men. He you call superior, whom I saw for some moments after the shipwreck at Cardoville Castle, has a bad look; and I am sorry to see you enrolled under such a commander."

"At Cardoville Castle!" exclaimed Agricola, struck with the identity of the name with that of the young lady of the

golden hair; "was it in Cardoville Castle that you were received after your shipwreck?"

"Yes, my boy; why, does that astonish you?" asked Dagobert.

"Nothing, father; but were the owners of the castle there at the time?"

"No; for the steward, when I applied to him for an opportunity to return thanks for the kind hospitality we had experienced, informed me that the person to whom the house belonged was resident at Paris."

"What a singular coincidence," thought Agricola, "if the young lady should be the proprietor of the dwelling which bears her name!"

This reflection having recalled to Agricola the promise which he had made to Mother Bunch, he said to Dagobert: "Dear father, excuse me; but it is already late, and I ought to be in the workshop by eight o'clock."

"That is too true, my boy. Let us go. This party is adjourned till my return from Chartres. Embrace me once more, and take care of yourself."

Since Dagobert had spoken of constraint and oppression to Gabriel, the latter had continued pensive. At the moment when Agricola approached him to shake hands, and to bid him adieu, the missionary said to him solemnly, with a grave voice, and in a tone of decision that astonished both the blacksmith and the soldier: "My dear brother, one word more. I have come here to say to you also, that within a few days hence I shall have need of you; and of you also, my father (permit me so to call you)," added Gabriel, with emotion, as he turned round to Dagobert.

"How! you speak thus to us!" exclaimed Agricola; "what is the matter?"

"Yes," replied Gabriel, "I need the advice and assistance of two men of honor—of two men of resolution;—and I can reckon upon you two—can I not? At any hour, on whatever day it may be, upon a word from me, will you come?"

Dagobert and his son regarded each other in silence, astonished at the accents of the missionary. Agricola felt an oppression of the heart. If he should be a prisoner when his brother should require his assistance, what could be done?

"At every hour, by night or by day, my brave boy, you may depend upon us," said Dagobert, as much surprised as interested—"You have a father and a brother; make your own use of them."

"Thanks, thanks," said Gabriel, "you set me quite at ease."

"I'll tell you what," resumed the soldier, "were it not for your priest's robe, I should believe, from the manner in which you have spoken to us, that you are about to be engaged in a duel—in a mortal combat."

"In a duel?" said Gabriel, starting. "Yes; it may be a duel—uncommon and fearful—at which it is necessary to have two witnesses such as you—A FATHER and A BROTHER!"

* * * * * * *

Some instants afterwards, Agricola, whose anxiety was continually increasing, set off in haste for the dwelling of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, to which we now beg leave to take the reader.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PAVILION.

DIZIER HOUSE was one of the largest and handsomest in the Rue Babylone, in Paris. Nothing could be more severe, more imposing, or more depressing than the aspect of this old mansion. Several immense windows, filled with small squares of glass, painted a grayish white, increased the sombre effect of the massive layers of huge stones, blackened by time, of which the fabric was composed.

This dwelling bore a resemblance to all the others that had been erected in the same quarter towards the middle of the last century. It was surmounted in front by a pediment; it had an elevated ground floor, which was reached from the outside by a circular flight of broad stone steps. One of the fronts looked on an immense court-yard, on each side of which an arcade led to the vast interior departments. The other front overlooked the garden, or rather park, of twelve or fifteen roods; and, on this side, wings, approaching the principal part of the structure, formed a couple of lateral galleries. Like nearly all the other great habitations of this quarter, there might be seen at the extremity of the garden, what the owners and occupiers of each called the lesser mansion.

This extension was a Pompadour summer-house, built in the form of a rotunda, with the charming though incorrect taste of the era of its erection. It presented, in every part where it was possible for the stones to be cut, a profusion of endives, knots of ribbons, garlands of flowers, and chubby cupids. This pavilion, inhabited by Adrienne de Cardoville

was composed of a ground floor, which was reached by a peristyle of several steps. A small vestibule led to a circular hall, lighted from the roof. Four principal apartments met here; and ranges of smaller rooms, concealed in the upper story, served for minor purposes.

These dependencies of great habitations are in our days disused, or transformed into irregular conservatories; but, by an uncommon exception, the black exterior of the pavilion had been scraped and renewed, and the entire structure repaired. The white stones of which it was built glistened like Parian marble; and its renovated, coquettish aspect contrasted singularly with the gloomy mansion seen at the other extremity of an extensive lawn, on which were planted here and there gigantic clumps of verdant trees.

The following scene occurred at this residence on the morning following that of the arrival of Dagobert, with the daughters of Marshal Simon, in the Rue Brise-Miche. The hour of eight had sounded from the steeple of a neighboring church; a brilliant winter sun arose to brighten a pure blue sky behind the tall leafless trees, which in summer formed a dome of verdure over the summer-house. The door in the vestibule opened, and the rays of the morning sun beamed upon a charming creature, or rather upon two charming creatures, for the second one, though filling a modest place in the scale of creation, was not less distinguished by a beauty of its own, which was very striking. In plain terms, two individuals, one of them a young girl, and the other a tiny English dog, of great beauty, of that breed of spaniels called King Charles's, made their appearance under the peristyle of the rotunda. The name of the young girl was Georgette; the beautiful little spaniel's was Frisky. Georgette was in her eighteenth year. Never had Florine or Manton, never had a lady's maid of Marivaux, a more mischievous face, an eye more quick, a smile more roguish, teeth more white, cheeks more roseate, figure more coquettish, feet smaller, or form smarter, attractive, and enticing. Though it was yet very early, Georgette was carefully and tastefully dressed. A tiny Valenciennes cap, with flaps and flap-band, of half peasant fashion, decked with rose-colored ribbons, and stuck a little backward upon bands of beautiful fair hair, surrounded her fresh and piquant face; a robe of gray levantine, and a cambric neck-kerchief, fastened to her bosom by a large tuft of rose-colored ribbons, displayed her figure elegantly rounded; a hollands apron, white as snow, trimmed below by three large hems, surmounted by a

Vandyke-row, encircled her waist, which was as round and flexible as a reed; her short, plain sleeves, edged with lone-lace, allowed her plump arms to be seen, which her long Swedish gloves, reaching to the elbow, defended from the rigor of the cold. When Georgette raised the bottom of her dress, in order to descend more quickly the steps, she exhibited to Frisky's indifferent eyes a beautiful ankle, and the beginning of the plump calf of a fine leg, encased in white silk, and a charming little foot, in a laced half-boot of Turkish satin. When a blonde like Georgette sets herself to be ensnaring; when vivid glances sparkle from her eyes of bright yet tender blue; when a joyous excitement suffuses her transparent skin, she is more resistless for the conquest of everything before her than a brunette.

This bewitching and nimble lady's-maid, who on the previous evening had introduced Agricola to the pavilion, was first waiting woman to the Honorable Miss Adrienne de Cardoville, niece of the Princess Saint-Dizier.

Frisky, so happily found and brought back by the blacksmith, uttered weak but joyful barks, and bounded, ran, and frolicked upon the turf. She was not much bigger than one's fist; her curled hair, of lustrous black, shone like ebony, under the broad, red satin ribbon which encircled her neck; her paws, fringed with long silken fur, were of a bright and fiery tan, as well as her muzzle, the nose of which was inconceivably pug; her large eyes were full of intelligence; and her curly ears so long that they trailed upon the ground. Georgette seemed to be as brisk and petulant as Frisky, and shared her sportiveness,—now scampering after the happy little spaniel, and now retreating, in order to be pursued upon the greensward in her turn. All at once, at the sight of a second person, who advanced with deliberate gravity, Georgette and Frisky were suddenly stopped in their diversion. The little King Charles, some steps in advance of Georgette, faithful to her name, and bold as the devil, held herself firmly upon her nervous paws, and fiercely awaited the coming up of the enemy, displaying at the same time rows of little teeth, which, though of ivory, were none the less pointed and sharp. The enemy consisted of a woman of mature age, accompanied by a very fat dog, of the color of coffee and milk; his tail was twisted like a corkscrew; he was pot-bellied; his skin was sleek; his neck was turned little to one side; he walked with his legs inordinately spread out, and stepped with the air of a doctor. His black muzzle, quarrelsome and scowling, showed two fangs sally-

ing forth, and turning up from the left side of the mouth; and altogether he had an expression singularly forbidding and vindictive. This disagreeable animal, a perfect type of what might be called a "church-goer's pug," answered to the name of "My Lord." His mistress, a woman of about fifty years of age, corpulent and of middle size, was dressed in a costume as gloomy and severe as that of Georgette was gay and showy. It consisted of a brown robe, a black silk mantle, and a hat of the same dye. The features of this woman might have been agreeable in her youth; and her florid cheeks, her correct eyebrows, her black eyes, which were still very lively, scarcely accorded with the peevish and austere physiognomy which she tried to assume. This matron, of slow and discreet gait, was Madame Augustine Grivois, first woman to the Princess Saint-Dizier. Not only did the age, the face, and the dress of these two women present a striking contrast; but the contrast extended itself even to the animals which attended them. There were similar differences between Frisky and My Lord, as between Georgette and Mrs. Grivois. When the latter perceived the little King Charles, she could not restrain a movement of surprise and repugnance, which escaped not the notice of the young lady's maid. Frisky, who had not retreated one inch, since the apparition of My Lord, regarded him valiantly, with a look of defiance, and even advanced towards him with an air so decidedly hostile, that the cur, though thrice as big as the little King Charles, uttered a howl of distress and terror, and sought refuge behind Mrs. Grivois, who bitterly said to Georgette:

"It seems to me, miss, that you might dispense with exciting your dog thus, and setting him upon mine."

"It was, doubtless, for the purpose of protecting this respectable but ugly animal from similar alarms, that you tried to make us lose Frisky yesterday, by driving her into the street through the little garden gate. But fortunately an honest young man found Frisky in the Rue de Babylone, and brought her back to my mistress. However," continued Georgette, "to what, madame, do I owe the pleasure of seeing you this morning?"

"I am commanded by the Princess," replied Mrs. Grivois, unable to conceal a smile of triumphant satisfaction, "immediately to see Miss Adrienne. It regards a very important affair, which I am to communicate only to herself."

At these words Georgette became purple, and could not repress a slight start of disquietude, which happily escaped

Grivois, who was occupied with watching over the safety of her pet, whom Frisky continued to snarl at with a very menacing aspect; and Georgette, having quickly overcome her temporary emotion, firmly answered: "Miss Adrienne went to rest very late last night. She has forbidden me to enter her apartment before mid-day."

"That is very possible: but as the present business is to obey an order of the Princess her aunt, you will do well if you please, miss, to awaken your mistress immediately."

"My mistress is subject to no one's orders in her own house; and I will not disturb her till mid-day, in pursuance of her commands," replied Georgette.

"Then I shall go myself," said Mrs. Grivois.

"Florine and Hebe will not admit you. Indeed, here is the key of the saloon; and through the saloon only can the apartments of Miss Adrienne be entered."

"How! do you dare refuse me permission to execute the orders of the Princess?"

"Yes; I dare to commit the great crime of being unwilling to awaken my mistress!"

"Ah! such are the results of the blind affection of the Princess for her niece," said the matron, with affected grief: "Miss Adrienne no longer respects her aunt's orders; and she is surrounded by young hare-brained persons, who, from the first dawn of morning, dress themselves out as if for ball-going."

"Oh, madame! how came you to revile dress, who were formerly the greatest coquette and the most frisky and fluttering of all the Princess's women. At least, that is what is still spoken of you in the hotel, as having been handed down from time out of mind, by generation to generation, even unto ours!"

"How! from generation to generation! do you mean to insinuate that I am a hundred years old, Miss Impertinence?"

"I speak of the generations of waiting-women; for, except you, it is the utmost if they remain two or three years in the Princess's house, who has too many tempers for the poor girls!"

"I forbid you to speak thus of my mistress, whose name some people ought not to pronounce but on their knees."

"However," said Georgette, "if one wished to speak ill of——"

"Do you dare!"

"No longer ago than last night, at half-past eleven o'clock——"

"Last night?"

"A four-wheeler," continued Georgette, "stopped at a few paces from the house. A mysterious personage, wrapped up in a cloak, alighted from it, and directly tapped, not at the door, but on the glass of the porter's lodge window; and at one o'clock in the morning, the cab was still stationed in the street, waiting for the mysterious personage in the cloak, who, doubtless, during all that time, was, as you say, pronouncing the name of her Highness the Princess on his knees."

Whether Mrs. Grivois had not been instructed as to a visit made to the Princess Saint-Dizier by Rodin (for he was the man in the cloak), in the middle of the night, after he had become certain of the arrival in Paris of General Simon's daughters; or whether Mrs. Grivois thought it necessary to appear ignorant of the visit, she replied, shrugging her shoulders disdainfully: "I know not what you mean, madame. I have not came here to listen to your impertinent stuff. Once again I ask you—will you, or will you not, introduce me to the presence of Miss Adrienne?"

"I repeat, madame, that my mistress sleeps, and that she has forbidden me to enter her bed-chamber before mid-day."

This conversation took place at some distance from the summer-house, at a spot from which the peristyle could be seen at the end of a grand avenue, terminating in trees arranged in form of a V. All at once Mrs. Grivois, extending her hand in that direction, exclaimed: "Great heavens! is it possible? what have I seen?"

"What have you seen?" said Georgette, turning round.

"What have I seen?" repeated Mrs. Grivois, with amazement.

"Yes: what was it?"

"Miss Adrienne."

"Where?" asked Georgette.

"I saw her run up the porch steps. I perfectly recognized her by her gait, by her hat, and by her mantle. To come home at eight o'clock in the morning!" cried Mrs. Grivois: "it is perfectly incredible!"

"See my lady? Why, you came to see her!" and Georgette burst out into fits of laughter: and then said: "Oh! I understand! you wish to out-do my story of the four-wheeler last night! It is very neat of you!"

"I repeat," said Mrs. Grivois, "that I have this moment seen——"

"Oh! adone, Mrs. Grivois: if you speak seriously, you are mad!"

"I am mad, am I? because I have a pair of good eyes! The little gate that opens on the street lets one into the *quinconce* near the pavilion. It is by that door, doubtless, that mademoiselle has re-entered. Oh, what shameful conduct! what will the Princess say to it! Ah! her presentiments have not yet been mistaken. See to what her weak indulgence of her niece's caprices has led her! It is monstrous!—so monstrous, that, though I have seen her with my own eyes, still I can scarcely believe it!"

"Since you've gone so far, ma'am, I now insist upon conducting you into the apartment of my lady, in order that you may convince yourself, by your own senses, that your eyes have deceived you!"

"Oh, you are very cunning, my dear, but not more cunning than I! You propose my going now! Yes, yes, I believe you: you are certain that by this time I shall find her in her apartment!"

"But, madame, I assure you——"

"All that I can say to you is this: that neither you, nor Florine, nor Hebe, shall remain here twenty-four hours. The Princess will put an end to this horrible scandal; for I shall immediately inform her of what has passed. To go out in the night! Re-enter at eight o'clock in the morning! Why, I am all in a whirl! Certainly, if I had not seen it with my own eyes, I could not have believed it! Still, it is only what was to be expected. It will astonish nobody. Assuredly not! All those to whom I am going to relate it, will say, I am quite sure, that it is not at all astonishing! Oh! what a blow to our respectable Princess! What a blow for her!"

Mrs. Grivois returned precipitately towards the mansion, followed by her fat pug, who appeared to be as embittered as herself.

Georgette, active and light, ran, on her part, towards the pavilion, in order to apprise Miss de Cardoville that Mrs. Grivois had seen her, or fancied she had seen her, furtively enter by the little garden gate.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ADRIENNE AT HER TOILET.

About an hour had elapsed since Mrs. Grivois had seen or pretended to have seen Adrienne de Cardoville re-enter in the morning the extension of Saint-Dizier House.

It is for the purpose, not of excusing, but of rendering in-

telligible, the following scenes, that it is deemed necessary to bring out into the light some striking peculiarities in the truly original character of Miss de Cardoville.

This originality consisted in an excessive independence of mind, joined to a natural horror of whatsoever is repulsive or deformed, and to an insatiable desire of being surrounded by everything attractive and beautiful. The painter most delighted with coloring and beauty, the sculptor most charmed by proportions of form, feel not more than Adrienne did the noble enthusiasm which the view of perfect beauty always excites in the chosen favorites of nature.

And it was not only the pleasures of sight which this young lady loved to gratify: the harmonious modulations of song, the melody of instruments, the cadences of poetry, afforded her infinite pleasures; while a harsh voice or a discordant noise made her feel the same painful impression, or one nearly as painful, as that which she involuntarily experienced from the sight of a hideous object. Passionately fond of flowers, too, and of their sweet scents, there are some perfumes which she enjoyed equally with the delights of music or those of plastic beauty. It is necessary, alas, to acknowledge one enormity: Adrienne was dainty in her food! She valued more than any one else the fresh pulp of handsome fruit, the delicate savor of a golden pheasant, cooked to a turn, and the odorous cluster of a generous vine.

But Adrienne enjoyed all these pleasures with an exquisite reserve. She sought religiously to cultivate and refine the senses given her. She would have deemed it black ingratitude to blunt those divine gifts by excesses, or to debase them by unworthy selections of objects upon which to exercise them; a fault from which, indeed, she was preserved by the excessive and imperious delicacy of her taste.

The BEAUTIFUL and the UGLY occupied for her the places which GOOD and EVIL holds for others.

Her devotion to grace, elegance, and physical beauty, had led her also to the adoration of moral beauty; for if the expression of a low and bad passion render uncomely the most beautiful countenances, those which are in themselves the most ugly are ennobled, on the contrary, by the expression of good feelings and generous sentiments.

In a word, Adrienne was the most complete, the most ideal personification of SENSUALITY—not of vulgar, ignorant, non-intelligent, mistaken sensuousness which is always deceitful and corrupted by habit or by the necessity for gross

and ill-regulated enjoyments, but that exquisite sensuality which is to the senses what intelligence is to the soul.

The independence of this young lady's character was extreme. Certain humiliating subjections imposed upon her success by its social position, above all things were revolting to her, and she had the hardihood to resolve to withdraw herself from them. She was a woman, the most womanish that it is possible to imagine—a woman in her timidity as well as in her audacity—a woman in her hatred of the brutal despotism of men, as well as in her intense disposition to self-devoting herself, madly even and blindly, to him who should merit such a devotion from her—a woman whose piquant wit was occasionally paradoxical—a superior woman, in brief, who entertained a well-grounded disdain and contempt for certain men either placed very high or greatly adulated, whom she had from time to time met in the drawing-room of her aunt, the Princess Saint-Dizier, when she resided with her.

These indispensable explanations being given, we usher the reader into the presence of Adrienne de Cardoville, who had just come out of the bath.

It would require all the brilliant colorings of the Venetian school to represent that charming scene, which would rather seem to have occurred in the sixteenth century, in some palace of Florence or Bologna, than in Paris, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in the month of February, 1832.

Adrienne's dressing-room was a kind of miniature temple, seemingly one erected and dedicated to the worship of beauty, in gratitude to the Maker who has lavished so many charms upon woman, not to be neglected by her, or to cover and conceal them with ashes, or to destroy them by the contact of her person with sordid and harsh haircloth; but in order that, with fervent gratitude for the divine gifts wherewith she is endowed, she may enhance her charms with all the illusions of grace and all the splendors of apparel, so as to glorify the divine work of her own perfections in the eyes of all. Daylight was admitted into this semicircular apartment, through one of those double windows, contrived for the preservation of heat, so happily imported from Germany. The walls of the pavilion being constructed of stone of great thickness, the depth of the aperture for the windows was therefore very great. That of Adrienne's dressing-room was closed on the outside by a sash containing a single large pane of plate glass, and within, by another large plate of ground glass. In the interval or space of

about three feet left between these two transparent enclosures, there was a case or box fill with furze mould, whence sprung forth climbing plants, which, directed round the ground glass, formed a rich garland of leaves and flowers. A garnet damask tapestry, rich with harmoniously blended arabesques, in the purest style, covered the walls: and a thick carpet of similar color was extended over the floor: and this sombre ground, presented by the floor and walls, marvellously enhanced the effects of all the harmonious ornaments and decorations of the chamber.

Under the window, opposite to the south, was placed Adrienne's dressing-case, a real masterpiece of the skill of the goldsmith. Upon a large tablet of *lapis-lazuli*, there were scattered boxes of jewels, their lids preciously enamelled; several scent boxes of rock crystal, and other implements and utensils of the toilet, some formed of shells, some of mother-of-pearl, and others of ivory, covered with ornaments of gold in extraordinary taste. Two large figures, modelled in silver with antique purity, supported an oval swing mirror, which had for its rim, in place of a frame curiously carved, a fresh garland of natural flowers, renewed every day like a nosegay for a ball.

Two enormous Japanese vases, of purple and gold, three feet each in diameter, were placed upon the carpet on each side of the toilet, and, filled with camellias, ibiscures, and cape jasmine, in full flower formed a sort of grove, diversified with the most brilliant colors. At the farther end of the apartment, opposite the casement, was to be seen, surrounded by another mass of flowers, a reduction in white marble of the enchanting group of Daphnis and Chloe, the more chaste ideal of graceful modesty and youthful beauty.

Two golden lamps burned perfumes upon the same pedestal which supported those two charming figures. A coffer of frosted silver, set off with small figures in jewelry and precious stones, and supported on four feet of gilt bronze, contained various necessaries for the toilette; two frosted Psyches, decorated with diamond ear-rings; some excellent drawings from Raphael and Titian, painted by Adrienne herself, consisting of portraits of both men and women of exquisite beauty; several consoles of oriental jasper, supporting ewers and basins of silver and of silver gilt, richly chased and filled with scented waters; a voluptuously rich divan, some seats, and an illuminated gilt table, completed the furniture of this chamber, the atmosphere of which was impregnated with the sweetest perfumes.

Adrienne, whom her attendants had just helped from the bath, was seated before her toilette, her three women surrounding her. By a caprice, or rather by a necessary and logical impulse of her soul, filled as it was with the love of beauty and of harmony in all things, Adrienne had wished the young women who served her to be very pretty, and be dressed with attention and with a charming originality. We have already seen Georgette, a piquante blonde, attired in her attractive costume of an intriguing lady's maid of Marivaux; and her two companions were quite equal to her both in gracefulness and gentility.

One of them, named Florine, a tall, delicately slender, and elegant girl, with the air and form of Diana Huntress, was of a pale brown complexion. Her thick black hair was turned up behind, where it was fastened with a long golden pin. Like the two other girls, her arms were uncovered to facilitate the performance of her duties about and upon the person of her charming mistress. She wore a dress of that gay green so familiar to the Venetian painters. Her petticoat was very ample. Her slender waist curved in from under the plaits of a tucker of white cambric, plaited in five minute folds, and fastened by five gold buttons. The third of Adrienne's women had a face so fresh and ingenuous, a waist so delicate, so pleasing, and so finished, that her mistress had given her the name of Hebe. Her dress of a delicate rose color, and Grecian cut, displayed her charming neck, and her beautiful arms up to the very shoulders. The physiognomy of these three young women was laughter-loving and happy. On their features there was no expression of that bitter sullenness, willing and hated obedience, or offensive familiarity, or base and degraded deference, which are the ordinary results of a state of servitude. In the zealous eagerness of the cares and attentions which they lavished upon Adrienne, there seemed to be at least as much of affection as of deference and respect. They appeared to derive an ardent pleasure from the services which they rendered to their lovely mistress. One would have thought that they attached to the dressing and embellishment of her person all the merits and the enjoyment arising from the execution of a work of art, in the accomplishing of which, fruitful of delights, they were stimulated by the passions of love, of pride, and of joy.

The sun beamed brightly upon the toilet-case, placed in front of the window. Adrienne was seated on a chair, its back elevated a little more than usual. She was enveloped

in a long morning-gown of blue silk, embroidered with a leaf of the same color, which was fitted close to her waist, as exquisitely slender and delicate as that of a child of twelve years, by a girdle with floating tags. Her neck, delicately slender and flexible as a bird's, was uncovered, as were also her shoulders and arms, and all were of incomparable beauty. Despite the vulgarity of the comparison, the purest ivory alone can give an idea of the dazzling whiteness of her polished satin skin, of a texture so fresh and so firm, that some drops of water, collected and still remaining about the roots of her hair from the bath, rolled in serpentine lines over her shoulders, like pearls, or beads, of crystal, over white marble.

And what gave enhanced lustre to this wondrous carnation, known but to auburn-headed beauties, was the deep purple of her humid lips,—the roseate transparency of her small ears, of her dilated nostrils, and her nails, as bright and glossy, as if they had been varnished. In every spot, indeed, where her pure arterial blood, full of animation and heat, could make its way to the skin and shine through the surface, it proclaimed her high health and the vivid life and joyous buoyancy of her glorious youth. Her eyes were very large, and of a velvet softness. Now they glanced, sparkling and shining with comic humor or intelligence and wit; and now they widened and extended themselves, languishing and swimming between their double fringes of long crisp eyelashes, of as deep a black as her finely-drawn and exquisitely arched eyebrows; for, by a delightful freak of nature, she had black eyebrows and eyelashes to contrast with the golden red of her hair. Her forehead, small like those of ancient Grecian statues, formed with the rest of her face a perfect oval. Her nose, delicately curved, was slightly aquiline; the enamel of her teeth glistened when the light fell upon them; and her vermeil mouth, voluptuously sensual, seemed to call for sweet kisses, and the gay smiles and delectations of dainty and delicious pleasure. It is impossible to behold or to conceive a carriage of the head freer, more noble, or more elegant than hers; thanks to the great distance which separated the neck and the ear from their attachment to her outspread and dimpled shoulders. We have already said that Adrienne was red-haired; but it was the redness of many of the admirable portraits of women by Titian and Leonardi da Vinci,—that is to say, molten gold presents not reflections more delightfully agreeable or more glittering, than the naturally undulating mass of her very long hair, as soft and fine as silk, so long, that, when

let loose, it reached the floor; in it, she could wholly envelop herself, like another Venus arising from the sea. At the present moment, Adrienne's tresses were ravishing to behold, Georgette, her arms, bare, stood behind her mistress, and had carefully collected into one of her small white hands, those splendid threads whose naturally ardent brightness was doubled in the sunshine. When the pretty lady's-maid plunged a comb of ivory into the midst of the undulating and golden waves of that enormously magnificent skein of silk, one might have said that a thousand sparks of fire darted forth and coruscated away from it in all directions. The sunshine, too, reflected not less golden and fiery rays from numerous clusters of spiral ringlets, which, divided upon Adrienne's forehead, fell over her cheeks, and in their elastic flexibility caressed the risings of her snowy bosom, to whose charming undulations they adapted and applied themselves. Whilst Georgette, standing, combed the beautiful locks of her mistress, Hebe, with one knee upon the floor, and having upon the other the sweet little foot of Miss Cardoville, busied herself in fitting it with a remarkably small shoe of black satin, and crossed its slender ties over a silk stocking of a pale yet rosy flesh-color, which imprisoned the smallest and finest ankle in the world. Florine, a little farther back, presented to her mistress, in a jeweled box, a perfumed paste, with which Adrienne slightly rubbed her dazzling hands and outspread fingers, which seemed tinted with carmine to their extremities. Let us not forget Frisky, who, couched in the lap of her mistress, opened her great eyes with all her might, and seemed to observe the different operations of Adrienne's toilet with grave and reflective attention. A silver bell being sounded from without, Florine, at a sign from her mistress, went out and presently returned, bearing a letter upon a small silver-gilt salver. Adrienne, while her women continued fitting on her shoes, dressing her hair, and arranging her in her habiliments, took the letter, which was written by the steward of the estate of Cardoville, and read aloud as follows:

"HONORED MADAME,—

"Knowing your goodness of heart and generosity, I venture to address you with respectful confidence. During twenty years I served the late Count and Duke of Cardoville, your noble father, I believe I may truly say, with probity and zeal. The castle is now sold; so that I and my wife, in our old age, behold ourselves about to be dismissed, and left destitute of all resources; which, alas! is very hard at our time of life."

"Poor creature!" said Adrienne, interrupting herself in

reading: "my father, certainly, always prided himself upon their devotion to him, and their probity." She continued:

"There does, indeed, remain to us a means of retaining our place here; but it would constrain us to be guilty of baseness; and, be the consequences to us what they may, neither I nor my wife wish to purchase our bread at such a price."

"Good, very good," said Adrienne, "always the same—dignity even in poverty—it is the sweet perfume of a flower, not the less sweet because it has bloomed in a meadow."

"In order to explain to you, honored madame, the unworthy task exacted from us, it is necessary to inform you, in the first place, that M. Rodin came here from Paris two days ago."

"Ah! M. Rodin!" said Mademoiselle de Cardoville, interrupting herself anew; "the secretary of Abbe d'Aigrigny! I am not at all surprised at him being engaged in a perfidious or black intrigue. But let us see."

"M. Rodin came from Paris to announce to us that the estate was sold, and that he was sure of being able to obtain our continuance in our place, if we would assist him in imposing a priest not of good character upon the new proprietor as her future confessor; and if, the better to attain this end, we would consent to calumniate another priest, a deserving and excellent man, much loved and much respected in the country. Even that is not all. I was required to write twice or thrice a week to M. Rodin, and to relate to him everything that should occur in the house. I ought to acknowledge, honored madame, that these infamous propositions were as much as possible disguised and dissimulated under sufficiently specious pretexts; but, notwithstanding the aspect which with more or less skill it was attempted to give to the affair, it was precisely and substantially what I have now had the honor of stating to you."

"Corruption, calumny, and false and treacherous impeachment!" said Adrienne, with disgust: "I cannot think of such wretches without involuntarily feeling my mind shocked by dismal ideas of black, venomous, and vile reptiles, of aspects most hideous indeed. How much more do I love to dwell upon the consoling thought of honest Dupont and his wife!" Adrienne proceeded:

"Believe me, we hesitated not an instant. We quit Cardoville, which has been our home for the last twenty years;—but we shall quit it like honest people, and with the consciousness of our integrity. And now, honored madame, if, in the brilliant circle in which you move—you, who are so benevolent and amiable—could find a place for us by your recommendation, then, with endless gratitude to you, we shall escape from a position of most cruel embarrassment."

"Surely, surely," said Adrienne, "they shall not in vain appeal to me. To wrest excellent persons from the grip of M. Rodin, is not only a duty but a pleasure: for it is at once a righteous and a dangerous enterprise; and dearly do

I love to brave powerful oppressors!" Adrienne again went on reading:

"After having thus spoken to you of ourselves, honored madame, permit us to implore your protection for other unfortunates; for it would be wicked to think only of one's self. Three days ago, two shipwrecks took place upon our ironbound coast. A few passengers only were saved, and were conducted hither, where I and my wife gave them all necessary attentions. All these passengers have departed for Paris, except one, who still remains, his wounds having hitherto prevented him from leaving the house, and, indeed, they will constrain him to remain for some days to come. He is a young East Indian prince, of about twenty years of age, and he appears to be as amiable and good as he is handsome, which is not a little to say, though he has a tawny skin, like the rest of his countrymen, as I understand."

"An Indian prince! twenty years of age! young, amiable, and handsome!" exclaimed Adrienne, gayly; "this is quite delightful, and not at all of an ordinary or vulgar nature! Oh! this Indian prince has already awakened all my sympathies! But what can I do with this Adonis from the banks of the Ganges, who has come to wreck himself upon the Picardy coast?"

Adrienne's three women looked at her with much astonishment, though they were accustomed to the singular eccentricities of her character.

Georgette and Hebe even indulged in discreet and restrained smiles. Florine, the tall and beautiful pale brown girl, also smiled like her pretty companions; but it was after a short pause of seeming reflection, as if she had previously been entirely engrossed in listening to and recollecting the minutest words of her mistress, who, though powerfully interested by the situation of the "Adonis from Ganges' banks," as she had called him, continued to read Dupont's letter:

"One of the countrymen of the Indian prince, who has also remained to attend upon him, has given me to understand that the youthful prince has lost in the shipwreck all he possessed, and knows not how to get to Paris, where his speedy presence is required by some affairs of the very greatest importance. It is not from the prince himself that I have obtained this information: no; he appears to be too dignified and proud to proclaim of his fate; but his countryman, more communicative, has confidentially told me what I have stated, adding, that his young compatriot has already been subjected to great calamities, and that his father, who was the sovereign of an Indian kingdom, has been killed by the English, who have also dispossessed his son of his crown."

"This is very singular," said Adrienne, thoughtfully. "These circumstances recall to my mind that my father often mentioned that one of our relations was espoused in

India by a native monarch; and that General Simon (whom they have created a marshal) had entered into his service." Then interrupting herself to indulge in a smile, she added, "Gracious! this affair will be quite odd and fantastical! Such things happen to nobody but me; and then people say that I am the uncommon creature! But it seems to me that it is not I, but Providence, which, in truth, sometimes shows itself very eccentric! But let us see if worthy Dupont gives the name of this handsome prince?"

"We trust, honored madame, that you will pardon our boldness: but we should have thought ourselves very selfish, if, while stating to you our own griefs, we had not also informed you that there is with us a brave and estimable prince involved in so much distress. In fine, lady, trust to me; I am old; and I have had much experience of men; and it was only necessary to see the nobleness of expression and the sweetness of countenance of this young Indian, to enable me to judge that he is worthy of the interest which I have taken the liberty to request in his behalf. It would be sufficient to transmit to him a small sum of money for the purchase of some European clothing; for he has lost all his Indian vestments in the shipwreck."

"Good heavens! European clothing!" exclaimed Adrienne, gayly. "Poor young prince! Heaven preserve him from that; and me also! Chance has sent hither from the heart of India, a mortal so far favored as never to have worn the abominable European costume—those hideous habits, and frightful hats, which render the men so ridiculous, so ugly, that in truth there is not a single good quality to be discovered in them, nor one spark of what can either captivate or attract! There comes to me at last a handsome young prince from the East, where the men are clothed in silk and cashmere. Most assuredly I'll not miss this rare and unique opportunity of exposing myself to a very serious and formidable temptation! No, no! not a European dress for me, though poor Dupont requests it! But the name—the name of this dear prince! Once more, what a singular event is this! If it should turn out to be that cousin from beyond the Ganges! During my childhood, I have heard so much in praise of his royal father! Oh! I shall be quite ravished to give his son the kind reception which he merits!" And then she read on:

"If, besides this small sum, honored madame, you are so kind as to give him, and also his companion, the means of reaching Paris, you will confer a very great service upon this poor young prince, who is at present so unfortunate.

"To conclude, I know enough of your delicacy to be aware that it would perhaps be agreeable to you to afford this succor to the prince without being known as his benefactress; in which case, I beg that you

will be pleased to command me; and you may rely upon my discretion. If, on the contrary, you wish to address it directly to himself, his name is, as it has been written for me by his countryman, 'Prince Djalma, son of Radja-sing, King of Mundi.'"

"Djalma!" said Adrienne, quickly, and appearing to call up her recollections, "Radja-sing! Yes—that is it! These are the very names that my father so often repeated, while telling me that there was nothing more chivalric or heroic in the world than the old king, our relation by marriage; and the son has not derogated, it would seem, from that character. Yes, Djalma, Radja-sing—once more, that is it—such names are not so common," she added, smiling, "that one should either forget or confound them with others. This Djalma is my cousin! Brave and good—young and charming! above all, he has never worn the horrid European dress! And destitute of every resource! This is quite ravishing! It is too much happiness at once! Quick, quick! let us improvise a pretty fairy tale, of which the handsome and beloved prince shall be the hero! The poor bird of the golden and azure plumage has wandered into our dismal climate; but he will find here, at least, something to remind him of his native region of sunshine and perfumes!" Then, addressing one of her women, she said: "Georgette, take paper and write, my child!" The young girl went to the gilt, illuminated table, which contained materials for writing; and, having seated herself, she said to her mistress: "I await orders."

Adrienne de Cardoville, whose charming countenance was radiant with the gayety of happiness and joy, proceeded to dictate the following letter to a meritorious old painter, who had long since taught her the arts of drawing and designing; in which arts she excelled, as indeed she did in all others:

"My dear Titian, my good Veronese, my worthy Raphael,—You can render me a very great service,—and you will do it, I am sure, with that perfect and obliging complaisance by which you are ever distinguished.

"It is to go immediately and apply yourself to the skilful hand who designed my last costumes of the fifteenth century. But the present affair is to procure modern East Indian dresses for a young man—yes, sir—for a young man,—and according to what I imagine of him, I fancy that you can cause his measure to be taken from the Antinous, or rather, from the Indian Bacchus; yes—that will be more likely.

"It is necessary that these vestments be at once of perfect propriety and correctness, magnificently rich, and of the greatest elegance. You will choose the most beautiful stuffs possible; and endeavor, above all things, that they be, or resemble, tissues of Indian manufacture; and

you will add to them, for turbans and sashes, six splendid long cashmere shawls, two of them white, two red, and two orange; as nothing suits brown complexions better than those colors.

"This done (and I allow you at the utmost only two or three days), you will depart post in my carriage for Cardoville Manor House, which you know so well. The steward, the excellent Dupont, one of your old friends, will there introduce you to a young Indian Prince, named Djalma; and you will tell that most potent, grave, and reverend signior, of another quarter of the globe, that you have come on the part of an unknown friend, who, taking upon himself the duty of a brother, sends him what is necessary to preserve him from the odious fashions of Europe. You will add, that his friend expects him with so much impatience that he conjures him to come to Paris immediately. If he objects that he is suffering, you will tell him that my carriage is an excellent bed-closet; and you will cause the bedding, etc., which it contains, to be fitted up, till he finds it quite commodious. Remember to make very humble excuses for the unknown friend not sending to the prince either rich palanquins, or even, modestly, a single elephant: for alas! palanquins are only to be seen at the opera; and there are no elephants but those in the menagerie,—though this must make us seem strangely barbarous in his eyes.

"As soon as you shall have decided on your departure, perform the journey as rapidly as possible, and bring here, into my house, in the Rue de Babylone (what predestination! that I should dwell in the street of BABYLON,—a name which must at least accord with the ear of an Oriental),—you will bring hither, I say, this dear prince, who is so happy as to have been born in a country of flowers, diamonds, and sun!

"Above all, you will have the kindness, my old and worthy friend, not to be at all astonished at this new freak, and refrain from indulging in extravagant conjectures. Seriously, the choice which I have made of you in this affair,—of you, whom I esteem and most sincerely honor,—is because it is sufficient to say to you that, at the bottom of all this, there is something more than a seeming act of folly."

In uttering these last words, the tone of Adrienne was as serious and dignified as it had been previously comic and jocose. But she quickly resumed, more gayly, dictating to Georgette.

"Adieu, my old friend. I am something like that commander of ancient days, whose heroic nose and conquering chin you have so often made me draw: I jest with the utmost freedom of spirit even in the moment of battle: yes, for within an hour I shall give battle, a pitched battle—to my dear pew-dwelling aunt. Fortunately, audacity and courage never failed me; and I burn with impatience for the engagement with my austere princess.

"A kiss, and a thousand heartfelt recollections to your excellent wife. If I speak of her here, who is so justly respected, you will please to understand, it is to make you quite at ease as to the consequences of this running away with, for my sake, a charming young prince,—for it is proper to finish well, where I should have begun, by avowing to you that he is charming indeed!

"Once more, adieu!"

Then, addressing Georgette, said she, "Have you done writing, chit?"

"Yes, madame."

"Oh, add this postscript."

"P.S.—I send you draft on sight on my banker for all expenses. Spare nothing. You know I am quite a grand seigneur. I must use this masculine expression, since your sex have exclusively appropriated to yourselves (tyrants as you are) a term, so significant as it is of noble generosity."

"Now, Georgette," said Adrienne, "bring me an envelope, and the letter, that I may sign it." Mademoiselle de Cardoville took the pen that Georgette presented to her, signed the letter, and enclosed in it an order upon her banker, which was expressed thus:

"Please pay M. Norval, on demand without grace, the sum of money he may require for expenses incurred on my account.

"ADRIENNE DE CARDOVILLE."

During all this scene, while Georgette wrote, Florine and Hebe had continued to busy themselves with the duties of their mistress's toilette, who had put off her morning gown, and was now in full dress, in order to wait upon the princess, her aunt. From the sustained and immovably fixed attention with which Florine had listened to Adrienne's dictating to Georgette her letter to M. Norval, it might easily have been seen that, as was her habit indeed, she endeavored to retain in her memory even the slightest words of her mistress.

"Now, chit," said Adrienne to Hebe, "send this letter immediately to M. Norval."

The same silver bell was again rung from without. Hebe moved towards the door of the dressing-room, to go and inquire what it was, and also to execute the order of her mistress as to the letter. But Florine precipitated herself, so to speak, before her, and so as to prevent her leaving the apartment; and said to Adrienne:

"Will it please my lady for me to send this letter? I have occasion to go to the mansion."

"Go, Florine, then," said Adrienne, "seeing that you wish it. Georgette, seal the letter."

At the end of a second or two, during which Georgette had sealed the letter, Hebe returned.

"Madame," said she, re-entering, "the working-man who brought back Frisky yesterday, entreats you to admit him for an instant. He is very pale, and he appears quite sad."

"Would that he may already have need of me! I should be too happy!" said Adrienne gayly. "Show the excellent

young man into the little saloon. And, Florine, despatch this letter immediately."

Florine went out. Miss de Cardoville, followed by Frisky, entered the little reception-room, where Agricola awaited her.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE INTERVIEW.

When Adrienne de Cardoville entered the saloon where Agricola expected her, she was dressed with extremely elegant simplicity. A robe of deep blue, perfectly fitted to her shape, embroidered in front with interlacings of black silk, according to the then fashion, outlined her nymph-like figure and her rounded bosom. A French cambric collar, fastened by a large Scotch pebble, set as a brooch, served her for necklace. Her magnificent golden hair formed a framework for her fair countenance, with an incredible profusion of long and light spiral tresses, which reached nearly to her waist.

Agricola, in order to save explanations with his father, and to make him believe that he had indeed gone to the workshop of M. Hardy, had been obliged to array himself in his working dress; he had put on a new blouse though, and the collar of his shirt, of stout linen, very white, fell over upon a black cravat, negligently tied; his gray trousers allowed his well-polished boots to be seen; and he held between his muscular hands a cap of fine woollen cloth, quite new. To sum up, his blue blouse, embroidered with red, showing off the nervous chest of the young blacksmith, and indicating his robust shoulders, falling down in graceful folds, put not the least constraint upon his free and easy gait, and became him much better than either frock-coat or dress-coat would have done. While awaiting Miss de Cardoville, Agricola mechanically examined a magnificent silver vase, admirably graven. A small tablet, of the same metal, fitted into a cavity of its antique stand, bore the words—"Chased by Jean Marie, working chaser, 1831."

Adrienne had stepped so lightly upon the carpet of her saloon, only separated from another apartment by the doors, that Agricola had not perceived the young lady's entrance. He started, and turned quickly round, upon hearing a silvery and brilliant voice say to him—

"That is a beautiful vase, is it not, sir?"

"Very beautiful, madame," answered Agricola greatly embarrassed.

"You may see from it that I like what is equitable," added Miss de Cardoville, pointing with her finger to the little silver tablet;—"an artist puts his name upon his painting; an author publishes his on the title-page of his book; and I contend that an artisan ought also to have his name connected with his workmanship."

"Oh, madame, so this name?"

"Is that of the poor chaser who executed this masterpiece, at the order of a rich goldsmith. When the latter sold me the vase, he was amazed at my eccentricity, he would have almost said at my injustice, when, after having made him tell me the name of the author of this production, I ordered his name to be inscribed upon it, instead of that of the goldsmith, which had already been affixed to the stand. In the absence of the rich profits, let the artisan enjoy the fame of his skill. Is it not just, sir?"

It would have been impossible for Adrienne to commence the conversation more graciously: so that the blacksmith, already beginning to feel a little more at ease, answered:

"Being a mechanic myself, madame, I cannot but be doubly affected by such a proof of your sense of equity and justice."

"Since you are a mechanic, sir," resumed Adrienne, "I cannot but felicitate myself on having so suitable a hearer. But please to be seated."

With a gesture full of affability, she pointed to an armchair of purple silk embroidered with gold, sitting down herself upon a *tête-à-tête* of the same materials.

Seeing Agricola's hesitation, who again cast down his eyes with embarrassment, Adrienne, to encourage him, showed him Frisky, and said to him gayly: "This poor little animal, to which I am very much attached, will always afford me a lively remembrance of your obliging complaisance, sir. And this visit seems to me to be of happy augury; I know not what good presentiment whispers to me, that perhaps I shall have the pleasure of being useful to you in some affair."

"Madame," said Agricola, resolutely, "my name is Baudoin: a blacksmith in the employment of M. Hardy, at Plessy, near the city. Yesterday you offered me your purse and I refused it: to-day, I have come to request of you perhaps ten or twenty times the sum that you had given-

erously proposed. I have said thus much all at once, madame, because it causes me the greatest effort. The words blistered my lips, but now I shall be more at ease."

"I appreciate the delicacy of your scruples, sir," said Adrienne; "but if you knew me, you would address me without fear. How much do you require?"

"I do not know, madame," answered Agricola.

"I beg your pardon. You don't know what sum?"

"No, madame; and I come to you to request, not only the sum necessary to me, but also information as to what that sum is."

"Let us see, sir," said Adrienne, smiling, "explain this to me. In spite of my good will, you feel that I cannot divine, all at once, what it is that is required."

"Madame, in two words. I can state the truth. I have a good old mother, who, in her youth, broke her health by excessive labor, to enable her to bring me up; and not only me, but a poor abandoned child whom she had picked up. It is my turn now to maintain her; and that I have the happiness of doing. But in order to do so, I have only my labor. If I am dragged from my employment, my mother will be without support."

"Your mother cannot want for anything now, sir, since I interest myself for her."

"You will interest yourself for her, madame?" said Agricola.

"Certainly," replied Adrienne.

"But you don't know her," exclaimed the blacksmith.

"Now I do; yes."

"Oh, madame!" said Agricola, with emotion, after a moment's silence. "I understand you. But indeed you have a noble heart. Mother Bunch was right."

"Mother Bunch?" said Adrienne, looking at Agricola with a very surprised air; for what he said to her was an enigma.

The blacksmith, who blushed not for his friends, replied frankly.

"Madame, permit me to explain to you. Mother Bunch is a poor and very industrious young workwoman, with whom I have been brought up. She is deformed, which is the reason why she is called Mother Bunch. But though, on the one hand, she is sunk, as low as you are highly elevated on the other, yet, as regards the heart—as to delicacy—oh, lady, I am certain that your heart is of equal worth with hers! That was at once her own thought, after I had

related to her in what manner, yesterday, you had presented me with that beautiful flower."

"I can assure you, sir," said Adrienne, sincerely touched, "that this comparison flatters and honors me more than anything else that you could say to me,—a heart that remains good and delicate, in spite of cruel misfortunes, is so rare a treasure; while it is very easy to be good, when we have youth and beauty, and to be delicate and generous, when we are rich. I accept, then, your comparison; but on condition that you will quickly put me in a situation to deserve it. Pray go on, therefore."

In spite of the gracious cordiality of Miss de Cardoville, there was always observable in her so much of that natural dignity which arises from independence of character, so much elevation of soul and nobleness of sentiment that Agricola, forgetting the ideal physical beauty of his protectress, rather experienced for her the emotions of an affectionate and kindly, though profound respect, which offered a singular and striking contrast with the youth and gayety of the lovely being who inspired him with this sentiment.

"If my mother alone, madame, were exposed to the rigor which I dread, I should not be so greatly disquieted with the fear of a compulsory suspension of my employment. Among poor people, the poor help one another; and my mother is worshipped by all the inmates of our house, our excellent neighbors, who would willingly succor her. But they themselves are far from being well off; and as they would incur privations by assisting her, their little benefits would still be more painful to my mother than the endurance even of misery by herself. And besides, it is not only for my mother that my exertions are required, but for my father, whom we have not seen for eighteen years, and who has just arrived from Siberia, where he remained during all that time, from zealous devotion to his former general, now Marshal Simon."

"Marshal Simon!" said Adrienne, quickly, with an expression of much surprise.

"Do you know the marshal, madame?"

"I do not personally know him; but he married a lady of our family."

"What joy!" exclaimed the blacksmith, "then the two young ladies, his daughters, whom my father has brought from Russia, are your relations!"

"Has Marshal Simon two daughters?" asked Adrienne, more and more astonished and interested.

"Yes, madame, two little angels of fifteen or sixteen, and so pretty, so sweet; they are twins so very much alike, as to be mistaken for one another. Their mother died in exile; and the little she possessed having been confiscated, they have come hither with my father, from the depths of Siberia, travelling very wretchedly; but he tried to make them forget so many privations by the fervency of his devotion and his tenderness. My excellent father! you will not believe, madame, that, with the courage of a lion, he has all the love and tenderness of a mother."

"And where are the dear children, sir?" asked Adrienne.

"At our home, madame. It is that which renders my position so very hard; that which has given me courage to come to you; it is not but that my labor would be sufficient for our little household, even thus augmented; but that I am about to be arrested."

"About to be arrested? For what?"

"Pray, madame, have the goodness to read this letter, which has been sent by some one to Mother Bunch."

Agricola gave to Miss de Cardoville the anonymous letter which had been received by the workwoman.

After having read the letter, Adrienne said to the blacksmith, with surprise, "It appears, sir, you are a poet!"

"I have neither the ambition nor the pretension to be one, madame. Only, when I return to my mother after a day's toil, and often, even while forging my iron, in order to divert and relax my attention, I amuse myself with rhymes, sometimes composing an ode, sometimes a song."

"And your song of the Freed Workman, which is mentioned in this letter, is, therefore, very disaffected—very dangerous?"

"Oh, no, madame; quite the contrary. For myself, I have the good fortune to be employed in the factory of M. Hardy, who renders the condition of his workpeople as happy as that of their less fortunate comrades is the reverse; and I had limited myself to attempt, in favor of the great mass of the working classes, an equitable, sincere, warm, and earnest claim—nothing more. But you are aware, perhaps, madame, that in times of conspiracy and commotion, people are often incriminated and imprisoned on very slight grounds. Should such a misfortune befall me, what will become of my mother, my father, and the two orphans whom we are bound to regard as part of our family until the return of their father, Marshal Simon? It is on this account, madame, that, if I remain, I run the risk of being

arrested. I have come to you to request you to provide surety for me; so that I should not be compelled to exchange the workshop for the prison, in which case I can answer for it that the fruits of my labor will suffice for all."

"Thank the stars!" said Adrienne, gayly, "this affair will arrange itself quite easily. Henceforth, Mr. Poet, you shall draw your inspirations in the midst of good fortune instead of adversity. Sad muse! But first of all, bonds shall be given for you."

"Oh, madame, you have saved us!"

"To continue," said Adrienne, "the physician of our family is intimately connected with a very important minister (understand that, as you like," said she, smiling, "you will not deceive yourself much). The doctor exercises very great influence over this great statesman; for he has always had the happiness of recommending to him, on account of his health, the sweets and repose of private life, to the very eve of the day on which his portfolio was taken from him. Keep yourself, then, perfectly at ease. If the surety be insufficient, we shall be able to devise some other means."

"Madame," said Agricola, with great emotion, "I am indebted to you for the repose, perhaps for the life of my mother. Believe that I shall ever be grateful."

"That is all quite simple. Now for another thing. It is proper that those who have too much should have the right of coming to the aid of those who have too little. Marshal Simon's daughters are members of my family, and they will reside here with me, which will be more suitable. You will apprise your worthy mother of this; and in the evening, besides going to thank her for the hospitality which she has shown to my young relations, I shall fetch them home."

* * * * * * *

At this moment Georgette, throwing open the door which separated the room from an adjacent apartment, hurriedly entered, with an affrighted look, exclaiming:

"Oh, madame, something extraordinary is going on in the street."

"How so? Explain yourself," said Adrienne.

"I went to conduct my dressmaker to the little garden gate," said Georgette; "where I saw some ill-looking men, attentively examining the walls and windows of the little out-building belonging to the pavilion, as if they wished to spy out some one."

"Madame," said Agricola, with chagrin, "I have not been deceived. They are after me."

"What say you?"

"I thought I was followed, from the moment when I left the Rue St. Méry: and now it is beyond doubt. They must have seen me enter your house; and are on the watch to arrest me. Well, now that your interest has been acquired for my mother,—now that I have no farther uneasiness for Marshal Simon's daughters,—rather than hazard your exposure to anything the least unpleasant, I run to deliver myself up."

"Beware of that, sir," said Adrienne, quickly. "Liberty is too precious to be voluntarily sacrificed. Besides, Georgette may have been mistaken. But in any case, I entreat you not to surrender yourself. Take my advice, and escape being arrested. That, I think, will greatly facilitate my measures; for I am of opinion that justice evinces a great desire to keep possession of those upon whom she has once pounced."

"Madame," said Hebe, now also entering with a terrified look, "a man knocked at the little door, and inquired if a young man in a blue blouse has not entered here. He added, that the person whom he seeks is named Agricola Baudoin, and that he has something to tell him of great importance."

"That's my name," said Agricola; "but the important information is a trick to draw me out."

"Evidently," said Adrienne; "and therefore we must play off trick for trick. What did you answer, child?" added she, addressing herself to Hebe.

"I answered, that I didn't know what he was talking about."

"Quite right," said Adrienne: "and the man who put the question?"

"He went away, madame."

"Without doubt to come back again, soon," said Agricola.

"That is very probable," said Adrienne, "and therefore, sir, it is necessary for you to remain here some hours with resignation. I am unfortunately obliged to go immediately to the Princess Saint-Dizier, my aunt, for an important interview, which can no longer be delayed, and is rendered more pressing still by what you have told me concerning the daughters of Marshal Simon. Remain here, then, sir; since if you go out, you will certainly be arrested."

"Madame, pardon my refusal; but I must say once more that I ought not to accept this generous offer."

"Why?"

"They have tried to draw me out, in order to avoid penetrating with the power of the law into your dwelling; but if I go not out, they will come in; and never will I expose you to anything so disagreeable. Now that I am no longer uneasy about my mother, what signifies prison?"

"And the grief that your mother will feel, her uneasiness, and her fears,—nothing? Think of your father; and that poor work-woman who loves you as a brother, and whom I value as a sister:—say, sir, do you forget them also? Believe me, it is better to spare those torments to your family. Remain here; and before the evening I am certain, either by giving surety, or some other means, of delivering you from these annoyances."

"But, madame, supposing that I do accept your generous offer, they will come and find me here."

"Not at all. There is in this pavilion, which was formerly the abode of a nobleman's left-handed wife,—you see, sir," said Adrienne, smiling, "that I live in a very profane place—there is here a secret place of concealment, so wonderfully well-contrived, that it can defy all searches. Georgette will conduct you to it. You will be very well accommodated. You will even be able to write some verses for me, if the place inspire you."

"Oh, madame! how great is your goodness! how have I merited it?"

"Oh, sir, I will tell you. Admitting that your character and your position do not entitle you to any interest;—admitting that I may not owe a sacred debt to your father for the touching regards and cares he has bestowed upon the daughters of Marshal Simon, my relations—do you forget Frisky, sir?" asked Adrienne, laughing,—"Frisky, there, whom you have restored to my fondlings? Seriously, if I laugh," continued this singular and extravagant creature, "it is because I know that you are entirely out of danger, and that I feel an increase of happiness. Therefore, sir, write for me quickly your address, and your mother's, in this pocket-book; follow Georgette; and spin me some pretty verses, if you do not bore yourself too much in that prison to which you fly."

While Georgette conducted the blacksmith to the hiding-place, Hebe brought her mistress a small gray beaver hat with a gray feather; for Adrienne had to cross the park to reach the house occupied by the Princess Saint-Dizier.

* * * * * * *

A quarter of an hour after this scene, Florine entered mysteriously the apartment of Mrs. Grivois, the first woman of the princess.

"Well?" demanded Mrs. Grivois of the young woman.

"Here are the notes which I have taken this morning," said Florine, putting a paper into the duenna's hand. "Happily, I have a good memory."

"At what time exactly did she return home this morning?" asked the duenna, quickly.

"Who, madame?"

"Miss Adrienne."

"She did not go out, madame. We put her in the bath at nine o'clock."

"But before nine o'clock she came home, after having passed the night out of her house. Eight o'clock was the time at which she returned, however."

Florine looked at Mrs. Grivois with profound astonishment, and said—

"I do not understand you, madame."

"What's that? Madame did not come home this morning at eight o'clock? Dare you lie?"

"I was ill yesterday, and did not come down till nine this morning, in order to assist Georgette and Hebe help our young lady from the bath. I know nothing of what passed previously, I swear to you, madame."

"That alters the case. You must ferret out what I allude to from your companions. They don't distrust you, and will tell you all."

"Yes, madame."

"What has your mistress done this morning since you saw her?"

"Madame dictated a letter to Georgette for M. Norval. I requested permission to send it off, as a pretext for going out, and for writing down all I recollected."

"Very well. And this letter?"

"Jerome had to go out, and I gave it him to put in the post-office."

"Idiot!" exclaimed Mrs. Grivois: "couldn't you bring it to me?"

"But, as madame dictated it aloud to Georgette, as is her custom, I knew the contents of the letter; and I have written it in my notes."

"That's not the same thing. It is likely there was need to delay sending off this letter; the princess will be very much displeased."

"I thought I did right, madame."

"I know that it is not good will that fails you. For these six months I have been satisfied with you. But this time you have committed a very great mistake."

"Be indulgent, madame! what I do is sufficiently painful!" The girl stifled a sigh.

Mrs. Grivois looked fixedly at her, and said in a sardonic tone:

"Very well, my dear, do not continue it. If you have scruples, you are free. Go your way."

"You well know that I am not free, madame," said Florine, reddening; and with tears in her eyes she added: "I am dependent upon M. Rodin, who placed me here."

"Wherefore these regrets, then?"

"In spite of one's self, one feels remorse. Madame is so good, and so confiding."

"She is all perfection, certainly! But you are not here to sing her praises. What occurred afterwards?"

"The working-man who yesterday found and brought back Frisky, came early this morning and requested permission to speak with my young lady."

"And is this working-man still in her house?"

"I don't know. He came in when I was going out with the letter."

"You must contrive to learn what it was this working-man came about."

"Yes, madame."

"Has your mistress seemed preoccupied, uneasy, or afraid of the interview which she is to have to-day with the princess? She conceals so little of what she thinks, that you ought to know."

"She has been as gay as usual. She has even jested about the interview!"

"Oh! jested, has she?" said the tire-woman, muttering between her teeth, without Florine being able to hear her: "'They laugh most who laugh last.' In spite of her audacious and diabolical character, she would tremble, and would pray for mercy, if she knew what awaits her this day." Then addressing Florine, she continued—

"Return, and keep yourself, I advise you, from those fine scruples, which will be quite enough to do you a bad turn. Do not forget!"

"I cannot forget that I belong not to myself, madame."

"Anyway, let it be so. Farewell."

Florine quitted the mansion and crossed the park to regain the summer-house, while Mrs. Grivois went immediately to the Princess Saint-Dizier.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A FEMALE JESUIT.

During the preceding scenes which occurred in the Pompadour rotunda, occupied by Miss de Cardoville, other events took place in the residence of the Princess Saint-Dizier. The elegance and sumptuousness of the former dwelling presented a strong contrast to the gloomy interior of the latter, the first floor of which was inhabited by the princess, for the plan of the ground floor rendered it only fit for giving parties; and, for a long time past, Madame de Saint-Dizier had renounced all worldly splendors. The gravity of her domestics, all aged and dressed in black; the profound silence which reigned in her abode, where everything was spoken, if it could be called speaking, in an undertone; and the almost monastic regularity and order of this immense mansion, communicated to everything around the princess a sad and chilling character. A man of the world, who joined great courage to rare independence of spirit, speaking of the princess (to whom Adrienne de Cardoville went, according to her expression, to fight a pitched battle), said of her as follows: "In order to avoid having Madame de Saint-Dizier for an enemy, I, who am neither bashful nor cowardly, have, for the first time in my life, been both a noodle and a coward." This man spoke sincerely. But Madame de Saint-Dizier had not all at once arrived at this high degree of importance.

Some words are necessary for the purpose of exhibiting distinctly some phases in the life of this dangerous and implacable woman who, by her affiliation with the Order of Jesuits, had acquired an occult and formidable power. For there is something even more menacing than a Jesuit: it is a Jesuitess; and, when one has seen certain circles, it becomes evident that there exist, unhappily, many of those affiliated, who, more or less, uniformly dress (for the lay members of the Order call themselves "Jesuits of the short robe").

Madame de Saint-Dizier, once very beautiful, had been, during the last years of the Empire, and the early years of the Restoration, one of the most fashionable women of Paris, of a stirring, active, adventurous, and commanding

spirit, of cold heart, but lively imagination. She was greatly given to amorous adventures, not from tenderness of heart, but from a passion for intrigue, which she loved as men love play—for the sake of the emotions it excites. Unhappily, such had always been the blindness or the carelessness of her husband, the Prince of Saint-Dizier (eldest brother of the Count of Rennepont and Duke of Cardoville, father of Adrienne), that during his life he had never said one word that could make it be thought that he suspected the actions of his wife. Attaching herself to Napoleon, to dig a mine under the feet of the Colossus, that design at least afforded emotions sufficient to gratify the humor of the most insatiable. During some time, all went well. The princess was beautiful and spirited, dexterous and false, perfidious and seductive. She was surrounded by fanatical adorers, upon whom she played off a kind of ferocious coquetry, to induce them to run their heads into grave conspiracies. They hoped to resuscitate the *Frondeur* party, and carried on a very active secret correspondence with some influential personages abroad, well known for their hatred against the emperor and France. Hence arose her first epistolary relations with the Marquis d'Aigrigny, then colonel in the Russian service and aide-de-camp to General Moreau. But one day all these petty intrigues were discovered. Many knights of Madame de Saint-Dizier were sent to Vincennes; but the emperor, who might have punished her terribly, contented himself with exiling the princess to one of her estates near Dunkirk.

Upon the Restoration, the persecutions which Madame de Saint-Dizier had suffered for the Good Cause were entered to her credit, and she acquired even then very considerable influence, in spite of the lightness of her behavior. The Marquis d'Aigrigny, having entered the military service of France, remained there. He was handsome, and of fashionable manners and address. He had corresponded and conspired with the princess, without knowing her; and these circumstances necessarily led to a close connection between them.

Excessive self-love, a taste for exciting pleasures, aspirations of hatred, pride, and lordliness, a species of evil sympathy, the perfidious attraction of which brings together perverse natures without mingling them, had made of the princess and the Marquis accomplices rather than lovers. This connection, based upon selfish and bitter feelings, and upon the support which two characters of this dangerous

temper could lend to each other against a world in which their spirit of intrigue, of gallantry, and of contempt had made them many enemies, this connection endured till the moment when, after his duel with General Simon, the Marquis entered a religious house, without any one understanding the cause of his unexpected and sudden resolution.

The princess, having not yet heard the hour of her conversion strike, continued to whirl round the vortex of the world with a greedy, jealous, and hateful ardor, for she saw that the last years of her beauty were dying out.

An estimate of the character of this woman may be formed from the following fact:

Still very agreeable, she wished to close her worldly and volatile career with some brilliant and final triumph, as a great actress knows the proper time to withdraw from the stage so as to leave regrets behind. Desirous of offering up this final incense to her own vanity, the princess skilfully selected her victims. She spied out in the world a young couple who idolized each other; and, by dint of cunning and address, she succeeded in taking away the lover from his mistress, a charming woman of eighteen, by whom he was adored. This triumph being achieved, Madame Saint-Dizier retired from the fashionable world in the full blaze of her exploit. After many long conversations with the Abbé-Marquis d'Aigrigny, who had become a renowned preacher, she departed suddenly from Paris, and spent two years upon her estate near Dunkirk, to which she took only one of her female attendants, viz., Mrs. Grivois.

When the princess afterwards returned to Paris, it was impossible to recognize the frivolous, intriguing, and dissipated woman she had formerly been. The metamorphosis was as complete as it was extraordinary and even startling. Saint-Dizier House, heretofore open to the banquets and festivals of every kind of pleasure, became gloomily silent and austere. Instead of the world of elegance and fashion, the princess now received in her mansion only women of ostentatious piety, and men of consequence, who were remarkably exemplary by the extravagant rigor of their religious and monarchical principles. Above all, she drew around her several noted members of the higher orders of the clergy. She was appointed patroness of a body of religious females. She had her own confessor, chaplain, almoner, and even spiritual director; but this last performed his functions *in partibus*. The Marquis-Abbé d'Aigrigny continued in reality to be her spiritual guide; and it is

almost unnecessary to say that for a long time past their mutual relations as to flirting had entirely ceased.

This sudden and complete conversion of a gay and distinguished woman, especially as it was loudly trumpeted forth, struck the greater number of persons with wonder and respect. Others, more discerning, only smiled.

A single anecdote, from amongst a thousand, will suffice to show the alarming influence and power which the princess had acquired since her affiliation with the Jesuits. This anecdote will also exhibit the deep, vindictive, and pitiless character of this woman, whom Adrienne de Cardoville had so imprudently made herself ready to brave.

Amongst the persons who smiled more or less at the conversion of Madame de Saint-Dizier were the young and charming couple whom she had so cruelly disunited before she quitted forever the scenes of revelry in which she had lived. The young couple became more impassioned and devoted to each other than ever; they were reconciled and married, after the passing storm which had hurled them asunder; and they indulged in no other vengeance against the author of their temporary infelicity than that of mildly jesting at the pious conversion of the woman who had done them so much injury.

Some time after, a terrible fatality overtook the loving pair. The husband, until then blindly unsuspicious, was suddenly inflamed by anonymous communications. A dreadful rupture ensued, and the young wife perished.

As for the husband, certain vague rumors, far from distinct, yet pregnant with secret meanings, perfidiously contrived, and a thousand times more detestable than formal accusations, which can, at least, be met and destroyed, were strewn about him with so much perseverance, with a skill so diabolical, and by means and ways so very various, that his best friends, by little and little, withdrew themselves from him, thus yielding to the slow, irresistible influence of that incessant whispering and buzzing, confused as indistinct, amounting to some such results as this—

"Well! you know!" says one.

"No!" replies another.

"People say very vile things about him!"

"Do they? really! What then?"

"I don't know! Bad reports! Rumors grievously affecting his honor!"

"The deuce! That's very serious. It accounts for the coldness with which he is now everywhere received!"

"I shall avoid him in future!"

"So will I," etc.

Such is the world, that very often nothing more than groundless surmises are necessary to brand a man whose very happiness may have incurred envy. So it was with the gentleman of whom we speak. The unfortunate man, seeing the void around him extending itself,—feeling (so to speak) the earth crumbling from beneath his feet, knew not where to find or grasp the impalpable enemy whose blows he felt; for not once had the idea occurred to him of suspecting the princess, whom he had not seen since his adventure with her. Anxiously desiring to learn why he was so much shunned and despised, he at length sought an explanation from an old friend; but he received only a disdainfully evasive answer; at which, being exasperated, he demanded satisfaction. His adversary replied—"If you can find two persons of *our* acquaintance, I will fight you!" The unhappy man could not find one!

Finally, forsaken by all, without having ever obtained an explanation of the reason for forsaking him—suffering keenly for the fate of the wife whom he had lost, he became mad with grief, rage, and despair, and killed himself.

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On the day of his death, Madame de Saint-Dizier remarked that it was fit and necessary that one who had lived so shamefully should come to an equally shameful end, and that he who had so long jested at all laws, human and divine, could not seemly otherwise terminate his wretched life than by perpetrating a last crime—suicide! And the friends of Madame de Saint-Dizier hawked about and everywhere repeated these terrible words with a contrite air, as if beatified and convinced! But this was not all. Along with chastisements there were rewards.

Observant people remarked that the favorites of the religious clan of Madame de Saint-Dizier rose to high distinction with singular rapidity. The virtuous young men, such as were religiously attentive to tiresome sermons, were married to rich orphans of the Sacred Heart Convents, who were held in reserve for the purpose; poor young girls, who, learning too late what it is to have a pious husband selected and imposed upon them by a set of devotees, often expiated by very bitter tears the deceitful favor of thus being admitted into a world of hypocrisy and falsehood, in which

they found themselves strangers without support, crushed by it if they dared to complain of the marriages to which they had been condemned.

In the parlor of Madame de Saint-Dizier were appointed prefects, colonels, treasurers, deputies, academicians, bishops and peers of the realm, from whom nothing more was required in return for the all-powerful support bestowed upon them, but to wear a pious gloss, sometimes publicly take the communion, swear furious war against everything impious or revolutionary,—and above all, correspond confidentially upon "different subjects of his choosing" with the Abbé d'Aigrigny,—an amusement, moreover, which was very agreeable; for the abbé was the most amiable man in the world, the most witty, and above all, the most obliging. The following is an historical fact, which requires the bitter and vengeful irony of Molière or Pascal to do it justice.

During the last year of the Restoration, there was one of the mighty dignitaries of the court a firm and independent man, who did not make profession (as the holy fathers call it), that is, who did not communicate at the altar. The splendor amid which he moved was calculated to give the weight of a very injurious example to his indifference. The Abbé-Marquis d'Aigrigny was therefore despatched to him; and he, knowing the honorable and elevated character of the non-communicant, thought that if he could only bring him to profess by any means (whatever the means might be) the effect would be what was desired. Like a man of intellect, the abbé prized the dogma but cheaply himself. He only spoke of the suitableness of the step, and of the highly salutary example which the resolution to adopt it would afford to the public.

"M. Abbé," replied the person sought to be influenced, "I have a greater respect for religion than you have. I should consider it an infamous mockery to go to the communion table without feeling the proper conviction."

"Nonsense! you inflexible man! you frowning Alcestes," said the Marquis-Abbé, smiling slyly. "Your profits and your scruples will go together, believe me, by listening to me. In short, we shall manage to make it a BLANK COMMUNION for you; for after all, what is it that we ask?—only the APPEARANCE!"

Now, a BLANK COMMUNION means breaking an unconsecrated wafer!

The Abbé-Marquis retired with his offers, which were rejected with indignation;—but then, the refractory man was

dismissed from his place at court. This was but a single isolated fact. Woe to all who found themselves opposed to the interest and principles of Madame de Saint-Dizier or her friends! Sooner or later, directly or indirectly, they felt themselves cruelly stabbed, generally irremediably—some in their dearest connections, others in their credit; some in their honor; others in their official functions; and all by secret action, noiseless, continuous, and latent, in time becoming a terrible and mysterious dissolvent, which invisibly undermined reputations, fortunes, positions the most solidly established, until the moment when all sunk forever into the abyss, amid the surprise and terror of the beholders.

It will now be conceived how under the Restoration the Princess de Saint-Dizier had become singularly influential and formidable. At the time of the Revolution of July (1830) she had "rallied," and, strangely enough, by preserving some relation of family and of society with persons faithful to the worship of decayed monarchy, people still attributed to the princess much influence and power. Let us mention, at last, that the Prince of Saint-Dizier, having died many years since, his very large personal fortune had descended to his younger brother, the father of Adrienne de Cardoville; and he, having died eighteen months ago, that young lady found herself to be the last and only representative of that branch of the family of the Rennepont.

The Princess of Saint-Dizier awaited her niece in a very large room, rendered dismal by its gloomy green damask. The chairs, etc., covered with similar stuff, were of carved ebony. Paintings of scriptural and other religious subjects, and an ivory crucifix thrown up from a background of black velvet, contributed to give the apartment a lugubrious and austere aspect.

Madame de Saint-Dizier, seated before a large desk, has just finished putting the seals on numerous letters; for she had a very extensive and very diversified correspondence. Though then aged about forty-five she was still fair. Advancing years had somewhat thickened her shape, which formerly of distinguished elegance, was still sufficiently handsome to be seen to advantage under the straight folds of her black dress. Her headdress, very simple, decorated with gray ribbons, allowed her fair sleek hair to be seen arranged in broad bands. At first look, people were struck with her dignified though unassuming appearance; and would have vainly tried to discover in her physiognomy,

now marked with repentant calmness, any trace of the agitations of her past life. So naturally grave and reserved was she, that people could not believe her the heroine of so many intrigues and adventures and gallantry. Moreover, if by chance she ever heard any lightness of conversation, her countenance, since she had come to believe herself a kind of "mother in the Church," immediately expressed candid but grieved astonishment, which soon changed into an air of offended chastity and disdainful pity.

"For the rest, her smile, when requisite, was still full of grace, and even of the seducing and resistless sweetness of seeming good-nature. Her large blue eyes, on fit occasions, became affectionate and caressing. But if any one dared to wound or ruffle her pride, gainsay her orders or harm her interests, her countenance, usually placid and serene, betrayed a cold but implacable malignity. Mrs. Grivois entered the cabinet, holding in her hand Florine's report of the manner in which Adrienne de Cardoville had spent the morning.

Mrs. Grivois had been about twenty years in the service of Madame de Saint-Dizier. She knew everything that a lady's-maid could or ought to have known of her mistress in the days of her sowing of wild (being a lady) flowers. Was it from choice that the princess had still retained about her person this so-well-informed witness of the numerous follies of her youth? The world was kept in ignorance of the motive; but one thing was evident, viz., that Mrs. Grivois enjoyed great privileges under the princess, and was treated by her rather as a companion than as a tiring-woman.

"Here are Florine's notes, madame," said Mrs. Grivois, giving the paper to the princess.

"I will examine them presently," said the princess; "but tell me, is my niece coming? Pending the conference at which she is to be present, you will conduct into her house a person who will soon be here, to inquire for you by my desire."

"Well, madame?"

"This man will make an exact inventory of everything contained in Adrienne's residence. You will take care that nothing is omitted; for that is of very great importance."

"Yes, madame. But should Georgette or Hebe make any opposition?"

"There is no fear; the man charged with taking the inventory is of such a stamp, that when they know him, they will not dare to oppose either his making the inventory, or his other steps. It will be necessary not to fail, as you go

along with him, to be careful to obtain certain peculiarities destined to confirm the reports which you have spread for some time past."

"Do not have the slightest doubt, madame. The reports have all the consistency of truth."

"Very soon, then, this Adrienne, so insolent and so haughty, will be crushed and compelled to pray for pardon; and from me!"

* * * * * * *

An old footman opened both of the folding doors, and announced the Marquis-Abbé d'Aigrigny.

"If Miss de Cardoville present herself," said the princess to Mrs. Grivois, "you will request her to wait an instant."

"Yes, madame," said the duenna, going out with the servant.

Madame de Saint-Dizier and D'Aigrigny remained alone.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PLOT.

The Abbé-Marquis d'Aigrigny, as the reader has easily divined, was the person already seen in the Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins; whence he had departed from Rome, in which city he had remained about three months. The marquis was dressed in deep mourning, but with his usual elegance. His was not a priestly robe; his black coat, and his waistcoat, tightly gathered in at the waist, set off to great advantage the elegance of his figure: his black cassimere pantaloons disclosed his feet, exactly fitted with laced boots, brilliantly polished. And all traces of his tonsure disappeared in the midst of the slight baldness which whitened slightly the back part of his head. There was nothing in his entire costume, or aspect, that revealed the priest, except, perhaps, the entire absence of beard, the more remarkable upon so manly a countenance. His chin, newly shaved, rested on a large and elevated black cravat, tied with a military ostentation which reminded the beholder, that this abbe-marquis—this celebrated preacher—now one of the most active and influential chiefs of his order, had commanded a regiment of hussars upon the Restoration, and had fought in aid of the Russians against France.

Returned to Paris only this morning, the marquis had not seen the princess since his mother, the Dowager Marchioness d'Aigrigny, had died near Dunkirk, upon an estate belonging to Madame de Saint-Dizier, while vainly calling for her son to alleviate her last moments; but the order to which M. d'Aigrigny had thought fit to sacrifice the most sacred feeling and duties of nature, having been suddenly transmitted to him from Rome, he had immediately set out for that city; though not without hesitation, which was remarked and denounced by Rodin; for the love of M. d Aigrigny for his mother had been the only pure feeling that had invariably distinguished his life.

When the servant had discreetly withdrawn with Mrs. Grivois, the marquis quickly approached the princess, held out his hand to her, and said with a voice of emotion:

"Herminia, have you not concealed something in your letters. In her last moments did not my mother curse me?"

"No, no, Frederick, compose yourself. She had anxiously desired your presence. Her ideas soon became confused. But in her delirium it was still for you that she called."

"Yes," said the marquis, bitterly; "her maternal instinct doubtless assured her that my presence could have saved her life."

"I entreat you to banish these sad recollections," said the princess, "this misfortune is irreparable."

"Tell me for the last time, truly, did not my absence cruelly affect my mother? Had she no suspicion that a more imperious duty called me elsewhere?"

"No, no, I assure you. Even when her reason was shaken, she believed that you had not yet had time to come to her. All the sad details which I wrote to you upon this painful subject are strictly true. Again, I beg of you to compose yourself."

"Yes, my conscience ought to be easy; for I have fulfilled my duty in sacrificing my mother. Yet I have never been able to arrive at that complete detachment from natural affection, which is commanded to us by those awful words: 'He who hates not his father and his mother, even with his soul, cannot be my disciple.'"*

* With regard to this text, a commentary upon it will be found in the *Constitutions of the Jesuits*, as follows: "In order that the habit of language may come to the help of the sentiments, it is wise not to say, 'I *have* parents, or I *have* brothers;' but to say, 'I *had* parents: I *had* brothers.'"—*General Examination*, p. 29; *Constitutions*.—Paulin, 1843. Paris.

"Doubtless, Frederick," said the princess, "these renunciations are painful. But, in return, what influence, what power!"

"It is true," said the marquis, after a moment's silence. "What ought not to be sacrificed in order to reign in secret over the all-powerful of the earth, who lord it in full day? This journey to Rome, from which I have just returned, has given me a new idea of our formidable power. For, Herminia, it is Rome which is the culminating point, overlooking the fairest and broadest quarters of the globe, made so by custom, by tradition, or by faith. Thence can our workings be embraced in their full extent. It is an uncommon view to see from its height the myriad tools, whose personality is continually absorbed into the immovable personality of our Order. What a might we possess! Verily, I am always swayed with admiration, aye, almost frightened, that man once thinks, wishes, believes, and acts as he alone lists, until, soon ours, he becomes but a human shell; its kernel of intelligence, mind, reason, conscience, and free will, shrivelled within him, dry and withered by the habit of mutely, fearingly bowing under mysterious tasks, which shatter and slay everything spontaneous in the human soul! Then do we infuse in such spiritless clay, speechless, cold, and motionless as corpses, the breath of our Order, and, lo! the dry bones stand up and walk, acting and executing, though only within the limits which are circled round them evermore. Thus do they become mere limbs of the gigantic trunk, whose impulses they mechanically carry out, while ignorant of the design, like the stonecutter who shapes out a stone, unaware if it be for cathedral or bagnio."

In so speaking, the marquis's features wore an incredible air of proud and domineering haughtiness.

"Oh, yes! this power is great, most great," observed the princess; "and the more formidable because it moves in a mysterious way over minds and consciences."

"Aye, Herminia," said the marquis: "I have had under my command a magnificent regiment. Very often have I experienced the energetic and exquisite enjoyment of command! At my word my squadrons put themselves in action; bugles blared, my officers, glittering in golden embroidery, galloped everywhere to repeat my orders: all my brave soldiers, burning with courage, and cicatrized by battles, obeyed my signal; and I felt proud and strong, holding as I did (so to speak) in my hands, the force and valor of each

and all combined into one being of resistless strength and invincible intrepidity,—of all of which I was as much the master, as I mastered the rage and fire of my war-horse! Aye! that was greatness. But now, in spite of the misfortunes which have befallen our Order, I feel myself a thousand times more ready for action, more authoritative, more strong and more daring, at the head of our mute and black-robed militia, who only think and wish, or move and obey, mechanically, according to my will. On a sign they scatter over the surface of the globe, gliding stealthily into households under the guise of confessing the wife or teaching the children, into family affairs by hearing the dying avowals, —up to the throne through the quaking conscience of a credulous crowned coward;—aye, even to the chair of the Pope himself, living manifesto of the Godhead though he is, by the services rendered him or imposed by him. Is not this secret rule, made to kindle or glut the wildest ambition, as it reaches from the cradle to the grave, from the laborer's hovel to the royal palace, from palace to the papal chair? What career in all the world presents such splendid openings? what unutterable scorn ought I not feel for the bright butterfly life of early days, when we made so many envy us? Don't you remember, Herminia?" he added, with a bitter smile.

"You are right, perfectly right, Frederick!" replied the princess quickly. "How little soever we may reflect, with what contempt do we not think upon the past! I, like you, often compare it with the present; and then what satisfaction I feel at having followed your counsels! For, indeed, without you, I should have played the miserable and ridiculous part which a woman always plays in her decline from having been beautiful and surrounded by admirers. What could I have done at this hour? I should have vainly striven to retain around me a selfish and ungrateful world of gross and shameful men, who court women only that they may turn them to the service of their passions, or to the gratification of their vanity. It is true that there would have remained to me the resource of what is called keeping an agreeable house for all others,—yes, in order to entertain them, be visited by a crowd of the indifferent, to afford opportunities of meeting to amorous young couples, who, following each other from parlor to parlor, come not to your house but for the purpose of being together; a very pretty pleasure, truly, that of harboring those blooming, laughing, amorous youths, who look upon the luxury and

brilliancy with which one surrounds them, as if they were their due upon bonds to minister to their pleasure, and to their impudent amours!"

Her words were so stinging, and such hateful envy sat upon her face, that she betrayed the intense bitterness of her regrets in spite of herself.

"No, no; thanks to you, Frederick," she continued, "After a last and brilliant triumph, I broke forever with the world, which would soon have abandoned me, though I was so long its idol and its queen. And I have only changed my queendom. Instead of the dissipated men whom I ruled with a frivolity superior to their own, I now find myself surrounded by men of high consideration, of redoubtable character, and all-powerful, many of whom have governed the state; to them I have devoted myself, as they have devoted themselves to me! It is now only that I really enjoy that happiness, of which I ever dreamt. I have taken an active part, and have exercised a powerful influence over the greatest interests of the world; I have been initiated into the most important secrets; I have been able to strike, surely, whosoever scoffed at or hated me; and I have been able to elevate beyond their hopes those who have served or respected and obeyed me."

"There are some madmen, and some so blind, that they imagine that we are struck down, because we ourselves have had to struggle against some misfortunes," said M. d'Aigrigny, disdainfully, "as if we were not, above all others, securely founded, organized for every struggle, and drew not from our very struggles a new and more vigorous activity. Doubtless the times are bad. But they will become better; and, as you know, it is nearly certain that in a few days (the 13th of February), we shall have at our disposal a means of action sufficiently powerful for re-establishing our influence which has been temporarily shaken."

"Yes, doubtless this affair of the medals is most important," said the princess.

"I should not have made so much haste to return hither," resumed the abbé, "were it not to act in what will be, perhaps, for us, a very great event."

"But you are aware of the fatality which has once again overthrown projects the most laboriously conceived and matured?"

"Yes; immediately on arriving I saw Rodin."

"And he told you——?"

"The inconceivable arrival of the Indian, and of General

Simon's daughters at Cardoville Castle, after a double ship wreck, which threw them upon the coast of Picardy; though it was deemed certain that the young girls were at Leipsic, and the Indian in Java. Precautions were so well taken, indeed," added the marquis in vexation, "that one would think an invisible power protects this family."

"Happily, Rodin is a man of resources and activity, resumed the princess. "He came here last night, and we had a long conversation."

"And the result of your consultation is excellent," added the marquis: "the old soldier is to be kept out of the way for two days: and his wife's confessor has been posted; the rest will proceed of itself. To-morrow, the girls need no longer be feared: and the Indian remains at Cardoville, wounded dangerously. We have plenty of time for action."

"But that is not all," continued the princess: "there are still, without reckoning my niece, two persons, who, for our interests, ought not to be found in Paris on the 13th of February."

"Yes, M. Hardy: but his most dear and intimate friend has betrayed him; for, by means of that friend, we have drawn M. Hardy into the South, whence it is impossible for him to return before a month. As for that miserable vagabond workman, surnamed 'Sleepinbuff!'——"

"Fie!" exclaimed the princess, with an expression of outraged modesty.

"That man," resumed the marquis, "is no longer an object of inquietude. Lastly, Gabriel, upon whom our vast and certain hope reposes, will not be left by himself for a single minute until the great day. Everything seems, you see, to promise success; indeed, more so than ever; and it is necessary to obtain this success at any price. It is for us a question of life or death; for, in returning, I stopped at Forli, and there saw the Duke d'Orbano. His influence over the mind of the king is all-powerful—indeed, absolute; and he has completely prepossessed the royal mind. It is with the duke alone, then, that it is possible to treat."

"Well?"

"D'Orbano has gained strength; and he can, I know it, assure to us a legal existence, highly protected, in the dominions of his master, with full charge of popular education. Thanks to such advantages, after two or three years in that country we shall become so deeply rooted, that this very Duke d'Orbano, in his turn, will have to solicit support and protection from us. But at present he has everything in

his power; and he puts an absolute condition upon his services."

"What is the condition?"

"Five millions down; and an annual pension of a hundred thousand francs."

"It is very much."

"Nay, but little if it be considered that our foot once planted in that country, we shall promptly repossess ourselves of that sum, which, after all, is scarcely an eighth part of what the affair of the medals, if happily brought to an issue, ought to assure to the Order."

"Yes, nearly forty millions," said the princess, thoughtfully.

"And again: these five millions that Orbano demands will be but an advance. They will be returned to us in voluntary gifts, by reason even of the increase of influence that we shall acquire from the education of children; through whom we have their families. And yet, the fools hesitate! those who govern see not, that in doing our own business, we do theirs also; —that in abandoning education to us (which is what we wish for above all things) we mould the people into that mute and quiet obedience, that servile and brutal submission, which assures the repose of states by the immobility of the mind. They don't reflect that most of the upper and middle classes fear and hate us; don't understand that (when we have persuaded the mass that their wretchedness is an eternal law, that sufferers must give up hope of relief, that it is a crime to sigh for welfare in this world, since the crown of glory on high is the only reward for misery here), then the stupefied people will resignedly wallow in the mire, all their impatient aspirations for better days smothered, and the volcano-blasts blown aside, which made the future of rulers so horrid and so dark? They see not, in truth, that this blind and passive faith which we demand from the mass, furnishes their rulers with a bridle with which both to conduct and curb them; whilst we ask from the happy of the world only some appearances which ought, if they had only the knowledge of their own corruption, to give an increased stimulant to their pleasures.

"It signifies not," resumed the princess; "since, as you say, a great day is at hand, bringing nearly forty millions, of which the Order can become possessed by the happy success of the affair of the medals. We certainly can attempt very great things. Like a lever in your hands, such a means of action would be of incalculable power, in times during which all men buy and sell one another."

"And then," resumed M. d'Aigrigny, with a thoughtful air, "here the reaction continues: the example of France is everything. In Austria and Holland we can rarely maintain ourselves; while the resources of the Order diminish from day to day. We have arrived at a crisis; but it can be made to prolong itself. Thus, thanks to the immense resource of the affair of the medals, we can not only brave all eventualities, but we can again powerfully establish ourselves, thanks to the offer of the Duke d'Orbano, which we accept; and then, from that inassailable centre, our radiations will be incalculable. Ah! the 13th of February!" added M. d'Aigrigny, after a moment of silence, and shaking his head: "the 13th of February, a date perhaps fortunate and famous for our power as that of the council which gave to us (so to say) a new life!"

"And nothing must be spared," resumed the princess, "in order to succeed at any price. Of the six persons whom we have to fear, five are or will be out of any condition to hurt us. There remains then only my niece; and you know that I have waited but for your arrival in order to take my last resolution. All my preparations are completed; and this very morning we will begin to act."

"Have your suspicions increased since your last letter?"

"Yes; I am certain that she is more instructed than she wishes to appear; and if so, we shall not have a more dangerous enemy."

"Such has always been my opinion. Thus it is six months since I advised you to take in all cases the measures which you have adopted, in order to provoke, on her part, that demand of emancipation, the consequences of which now render quite easy that which would have been impossible without it."

"At last," said the princess, with an expression of joy, hateful and bitter, "this indomitable spirit will be broken. I am at length about to be avenged of the many insolent sarcasms which I have been compelled to swallow, lest I should awaken her suspicions. I! I to have borne so much till now! for this Adrienne has made it her business (imprudent as she is!) to irritate me against herself!

"Whosoever offends you, offends me; you know it," said D'Aigrigny, "my hatreds are yours."

"And you yourself!" said the princess, "how many times have you been the butt of her poignant irony!"

"My instincts seldom deceive me. I am certain that this young girl may become a dangerous enemy for us," said the

marquis, with a voice painfully broken into short monosyl lables.

"And, therefore, it is necessary that she may be rendered incapable of exciting further fear," responded Madame de Saint-Dizier, fixedly regarding the marquis.

"Have you seen Dr. Baleinier, and the sub-guardian, M. Tripeaud?" asked he.

"They will be here this morning. I have informed them of everything."

"Did you find them well disposed to act against her?"

"Perfectly so—and the best is, Adrienne does not at all suspect the doctor, who has known how, up to a certain point, to preserve her confidence. Moreover, a circumstance which appears to me inexplicable has come to our aid."

"What do you allude to?"

"This morning, Mrs. Grivois went, according to my orders, to remind Adrienne that I expected her at noon, upon important business. As she approached the pavilion, Mrs. Grivois saw, or thought she saw, Adrienne come in by the little garden-gate."

"What do you tell me? Is it possible? Is there any positive proof of it?" cried the marquis.

"Till now, there is no other proof than the spontaneous declaration of Mrs. Grivois: but whilst I think of it," said the Princess, taking up a paper that lay before her, "here is the report which, every day, one of Adrienne's women makes to me."

"The one that Rodin succeeded in introducing into your niece's service?"

"The same; as this creature is entirely in Rodin's hands, she has hitherto answered our purpose very well. In this report, we shall perhaps find the confirmation of what Mrs. Grivois affirms she saw."

Hardly had the Princess glanced at the note, than she exclaimed almost in terror: "What do I see? Why, Adrienne is a very demon!"

"What now?"

"The bailiff at Cardoville, having written to my niece to ask her recommendation, informed her at the same time of the stay of the Indian prince at the castle. She knows that he is her relation, and has just written to her old drawing-master, Norval, to set out post with Eastern dresses, and bring Prince Djalma hither—the man that must be kept away from Paris at any cost."

The marquis grew pale, and said to Mme. de Saint-Dizier:

"If this be not merely one of her whims, the eagerness she displays in sending for this relation hither, proves that she knows more than you even suspected. She is 'posted' on the affair of the medals. Have a care she may ruin all."

"In that case," said the princess, resolutely, "there is no room to hesitate. We must carry things further than we thought, and make an end this very morning."

"Yes, though it is almost impossible."

"Nay, all is possible. The doctor and M. Tripeaud are ours," said the princess, hastily.

"Though I am as sure as you are of the doctor, or of M. Tripeaud, under present circumstances, we must not touch on the question of acting—which will be sure to frighten them at first—until after our interview with your niece. It will be easy, notwithstanding her cleverness, to find out her armor's defect. If our suspicions should be realized—if she is really informed of what it would be so dangerous for her to know—then we must have no scruples, and above all no delay. This very day must see all set at rest. The time for wavering is past."

"Have you been able to send for the person agreed on?" asked the princess, after a moment's silence.

"He was to be here at noon. He cannot be long."

"I thought this room would do very well for our purpose. It is separated from the smaller parlor by a curtain only, behind which your man may be stationed."

"Capital!"

"Is he a man to be depended on?"

"Quite so—we have often employed him in similar matters. He is as skilful as discreet?"

At this moment a low knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," said the princess.

"Dr. Baleinier wishes to know if her Highness the Princess can receive him," asked the valet-de-chambre.

"Certainly. Beg him to walk in."

"There is also a gentleman that M. l'Abbé appointed to be here at noon, by whose orders I have left him waiting in the oratory."

"'Tis the person in question," said the marquis to the princess. "We must have him in first. 'Twould be useless for Dr. Baleinier to see him at present."

"Show this person in first," said the princess; "next when I ring the bell, you will beg Dr. Baleinier to walk this way; and, if Baron Tripeaud should call, you will bring him here also. After that, I am at home to no one, except Mdlle. Adrienne." The servant went out.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ADRIENNE'S ENEMIES.

THE Princess de Saint-Dizier's valet soon returned, showing in a little, pale man, dressed in black, and wearing spectacles. He carried under his left arm a long black morocco writing-case.

The princess said to this man: "M. l'Abbé, I suppose, has already informed you of what is to be done?"

"Yes, your highness," said the man in a faint, shrill, piping voice, making at the same time a low bow.

"Shall you be conveniently placed in this room?" asked the princess, conducting him to the adjoining apartment, which was only separated from the other by a curtain hung before a doorway.

"I shall do nicely here, your highness," answered the man in spectacles, with a second and still lower bow.

"In that case, sir, please to step in here; I will let you know when it is time."

"I shall wait your highness's order."

"And pray remember my instructions," added the marquis, as he unfastened the loops of the curtain.

"You may be perfectly tranquil, M. l'Abbé." The heavy drapery, as it fell, completely concealed the man in spectacles.

The princess touched the bell; some moments after, the door opened, and the servant announced a very important personage in this work.

Dr. Baleinier was about fifty years of age, middling size, rather plump, with a full shining, ruddy countenance. His gray hair, very smooth and rather long, parted by a straight line in the middle, fell flat over his temples. He had retained the fashion of wearing short, black silk breeches, perhaps because he had a well-formed leg; his garters were fastened with small, golden buckles, as were his shoes of polished morocco leather; his coat, waistcoat, and cravat were black, which gave him rather a clerical appearance; his sleek, white hand was half hidden beneath a cambric ruffle, very closely plaited; on the whole, the gravity of his costume did not seem to exclude a shade of foppery.

His face was acute and smiling; his small gray eye announced rare penetration and sagacity. A man of the world

and a man of pleasure, a delicate epicure, witty in conversation, polite to obsequiousness, supple, adroit, insinuating, Baleinier was one of the oldest favorites of the congregational set of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. Thanks to this powerful support, its cause unknown, the doctor, who had been long neglected, in spite of real skill and incontestable merit, found himself, under the Restoration, suddenly provided with two medical sinecures most valuable, and soon after with numerous patients. We must add, that, once under the patronage of the princess, the doctor began scrupulously to observe his religious duties; he communicated once a week, with great publicity, at the high mass in Saint Thomas Aquinas Church.

At the year's end, a certain class of patients, led by the example and enthusiasm of Madame de Saint-Dizier's followers, would have no other physician than Doctor Baleinier, and his practice was now increased to an extraordinary degree. It may be conceived how important it was for the order, to have amongst its "plain clothes members" one of the most popular practitioners of Paris.

A doctor has in some sort a priesthood of his own. Admitted at all hours to the most secret intimacy of families, he knows, guesses, and is able to effect much. Like the priest, in short, he has the ear of the sick and the dying. Now, when he who cares for the health of the body, and he who takes charge of the health of the soul, understand each other, and render mutual aid for the advancement of a common interest, there is nothing (with certain exceptions), which they may not extract from the weakness and fears of a sick man at the last gasp—not for themselves (the laws forbid it)—but for third parties belonging more or less to the very convenient class of men of straw. Doctor Baleinier was therefore one of the most active and valuable assistant members of the Paris Jesuits.

When he entered the room, he hastened to kiss the princess's hand with the most finished gallantry.

"Always punctual, my dear M. Baleinier."

"Always eager and happy to attend to your highness's orders." Then turning towards the marquis, whose hand he pressed cordially, he added: "Here we have you then at last. Do you know, that three months' absence appears very long to your friends?"

"The time is as long to the absent as to those who remain, my dear doctor. Well! here is the great day. Mdlle. de Cardoville is coming."

"I am not quite easy," said the princess; "suppose she had any suspicion?"

"That's impossible," said M. Baleinier; "we are the best friends in the world. You know, that Mdlle. Adrienne has always had great confidence in me. The day before yesterday, we laughed a good deal, and as I made some observations to her, as usual, on her eccentric mode of life, and on the singular state of excitement in which I sometimes found her——"

"M. Baleinier never fails to insist on these circumstances, in appearance so insignificant," said Madame de Saint-Dizier to the marquis with a meaning look.

"They are indeed very essential," replied the other.

"Mdlle. Adrienne answered my observations," resumed the doctor, "by laughing at me in the gayest and most witty manner; for I must confess, that this young lady has one of the aptest and most accomplished minds I know."

"Doctor, doctor!" said Madame de Saint-Dizier, "no weakness!"

Instead of answering immediately, M. Baleinier drew his gold snuff-box from his waistcoat pocket, opened it, and took slowly a pinch of snuff, looking all the time at the princess with so significant an air, that she appeared quite reassured. "Weakness, madame?" observed he at last, brushing some grains of snuff from his shirt-front with his plump white hand; "did I not have the honor of volunteering to extricate you from this embarrassment?"

"And you are the only person in the world that could render us this important service," said D'Aigrigny.

"Your highness sees, therefore," resumed the doctor, "that I am not likely to show any weakness. I perfectly understand the responsibility of what I undertake; but such immense interests, you told me, were at stake——"

"Yes," said D'Aigrigny, "interests of the first consequence."

"Therefore I did not hesitate," proceeded M. Baleinier "and you need not be at all uneasy. As a man of taste, accustomed to good society, allow me to render homage to the charming qualities of Mdlle. Adrienne; when the time for action comes, you will find me quite as willing to do my work."

"Perhaps, that moment may be nearer than we thought," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, exchanging a glance with D'Aigrigny.

"I am, and will be, always ready," said the doctor. "I

answer for everything that concerns myself. I wish I could be as tranquil on every other point."

"Is not your asylum still as fashionable—as an asylum can well be?" asked Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a half smile.

"On the contrary. I might almost complain of having too many boarders. It is not that. But, whilst we are waiting for Mdlle. Adrienne, I will mention another subject, which only relates to her indirectly, for it concerns the person who bought Cardoville Manor, one Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, who has taken me for a doctor, thanks to Rodin's able management."

"True," said D'Aigrigny; "Rodin wrote to me on the subject—but without entering into details."

"These are the facts," resumed the doctor. "This Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, who was at first considered easy enough to lead, has shown herself very refractory on the head of her conversion. Two spiritual directors have already renounced the task of saving her soul. In despair, Rodin unslipped little Philippon on her. He is adroit, tenacious, and above all patient in the extreme—the very man that was wanted. When I got Madame de la Sainte-Colombe for a patient, Philippon asked my aid, which he was naturally entitled to. We agreed upon our plan. I was not to appear to know him the least in the world; and he was to keep me informed of the variations in the moral state of his penitent, so that I might be able, by the use of very inoffensive medicines—for there was nothing dangerous in the illness—to keep my patient in alternate states of improvement or the reverse, according as her director had reason to be satisfied or displeased—so that he might say to her: 'You see, madame, you are in the good way! Spiritual grace acts upon your bodily health, and you are already better. If, on the contrary, you fall back into evil courses, you feel immediately some physical ail, which is a certain proof of the powerful influence of faith, not only on the soul, but on the body also?'"

"It is doubtless painful," said D'Aigrigny, with perfect coolness, "to be obliged to have recourse to such means, to rescue perverse souls from perdition—but we must needs proportion our modes of action to the intelligence and the character of the individual."

"By-the-bye, the princess knows," resumed the doctor, "that I have often pursued this plan at St. Mary's Convent, to the great advantage of the soul's peace and health of some

of our patients, being extremely innocent. These alternations never exceed the difference between "pretty well," and "not quite so well." Yet small as are the variations, they act most efficaciously on certain minds. It was thus with Madame de la Sainte-Colombe. She was in such a fair way of recovery, both moral and physical, that Rodin thought he might get Philippon to advise the country for his penitent, fearing that Paris air might occasion a relapse. This advice, added to the desire the woman had to play 'lady of the parish,' induced her to buy Cardoville Manor, a good investment in any respect. But yesterday, unfortunate Philippon came to tell me, that Madame de la Sainte-Colombe was about to have an awful relapse—moral, of course—for her physical health is now desperately good. The said relapse appears to have been occasioned by an interview she has had with one Jacques Dumoulin, whom they tell me you know, my dear abbé; he has introduced himself to her, nobody can guess how."

"This Jacques Dumoulin," said the marquis, with disgust, "is one of those men, that we employ while we despise. He is a writer full of gall, envy, and hate, qualities that give him a certain unmercifully cutting eloquence. We pay him largely to attack our enemies, though it is often painful to see principles we respect defended by such a pen. For this wretch lives like a vagabond—is constantly in taverns—almost always intoxicated—but, I must own, his power of abuse is inexhaustible, and he is well versed in the most abstruse theological controversies, so that he is sometimes very useful to us."

"Well! though Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is hard upon sixty, it appears that Dumoulin has matrimonial views on her large fortune. You will do well to inform Rodin, so that he may be on his guard against the dark designs of this rascal. I really beg a thousand pardons for having so long occupied you with such a paltry affair—but, talking of St. Mary's Convent," added the doctor, addressing the princess, "may I take the liberty of asking if your highness has been there lately?"

The princess exchanged a rapid glance with D'Aigrigny, and answered: "Oh, let me see! Yes, I was there about a week ago."

"You will find great changes then. The wall that was next to my asylum has been taken down, for they are going to build a new wing and a chapel, the old one being too small. I must say, in praise of Mdlle. Adrienne," continued

the doctor with a singular smile aside, "that she promised me a copy of one of Raphael's Madonnas for this chapel."

"Really? very appropriate!" said the princess. "But here it is almost noon, and M. Tripeaud has not come."

"He is the deputy-guardian of Mdlle. de Cardoville, whose property he has managed, as former agent of the count-duke," said the marquis, with evident anxiety, "and his presence here is absolutely indispensable. It is greatly to be desired that his coming should precede that of Mdlle. de Cardoville, who may be here at any moment."

"It is unlucky that his portrait will not do as well," said the doctor, smiling maliciously, and drawing a small pamphlet from his pocket.

"What is that, doctor?" asked the princess.

"One of those anonymous sheets, which are published from time to time. It is called the 'Scourge,' and Baron Tripeaud's portrait is drawn with such faithfulness, that it ceases to be satire. It is really quite life-like; you have only to listen. The sketch is entitled: 'TYPE OF THE LYNX-SPECIES.'

"'The Baron Tripeaud.—This man, who is as basely humble towards his social superiors, as he is insolent and coarse to those who depend upon him is the living, frightful incarnation of the worst portion of the moneyed and commercial aristocracy—one of the rich and cynical speculators, without heart, faith or conscience, who would speculate for a rise or fall on the death of his mother, if the death of his mother could influence the price of stocks.

"'Such persons have all the odious vices of men suddenly elevated, not like those whom honest and patient labor has nobly enriched, but like those who owe their wealth to some blind caprice of fortune, or some lucky cast of the net in the miry waters of stock-jobbing.

"'Once up in the world, they hate the people—because the people remind them of a mushroom origin of which they are ashamed. Without pity for the dreadful misery of the masses, they ascribe it wholly to idleness or debauchery, because this calumny forms an excuse for their barbarous selfishness.

"'And this is not all. On the strength of his well-filled safe, mounted on his right of the candidate, Baron Tripeaud insults the poverty and political disfranchisement—

"'Of the officer, who, after forty years of wars and hard service, is just able to live on a scanty pension—

"'Of the magistrate, who has consumed his strength in

the discharge of stern and sad duties, and who is not better remunerated in his latter days—

"'Of the learned man who has made his country illustrious by useful labors; or the professor who has initiated entire generations in the various branches of human knowledge—

"'Of the modest and virtuous country curate, the pure representative of the gospel, in its charitable, fraternal, and democratic tendencies, etc.

"'In such a state of things, how should our shoddy baron of *in-dust-ry* not feel the most sovereign contempt for all that stupid mob of honest folk, who, having given to their country their youth, their mature age, their blood, their intelligence, their learning, see themselves deprived of the rights which he enjoys, because he has gained a million by unfair and illegal transactions?

"'It is true, that your optimists say to these pariahs of civilization, whose proud and noble poverty cannot be too much revered and honored: "Buy an estate and you too may be electors and candidates!"

"'But to come to the biography of our worthy baron—Andrew Tripeaud, the son of an ostler, at a roadside inn——'"

At this instant the folding-doors were thrown open, and the valet announced: "The Baron Tripeaud!"

Dr. Baleinier put his pamphlet into his pocket, made the most cordial bow to the financier, and even rose to give him his hand. The baron entered the room, overwhelming every one with salutations. "I have the honor to attend the orders of your highness the princess. She knows that she may always count upon me."

"I do indeed rely upon you, M. Tripeaud, and particularly under present circumstances."

"If the intentions of your highness the princess are still the same with regard to Mdlle. de Cardoville——"

"They are still the same, M. Tripeaud, and we meet today on that subject."

"Your highness may be assured of my concurrence, as, indeed, I have already promised. I think that the greatest severity must at length be employed, and that even if it were necessary——"

"That is also our opinion," said the marquis, hastily making a sign to the princess, and glancing at the place where the man in spectacles was hidden; "we are all perfectly in harmony. Still, we must not leave any point doubtful, for

the sake of the young lady herself, whose interests alone guides us in this affair. We must draw out her sincerity by every possible means."

"Mademoiselle has just arrived from the summer-house and wishes to see your highness," said the valet, again entering, after having knocked at the door.

"Say that I wait for her," answered the princess; "and now I am at home to no one—without exception. You understand me; absolutely to no one."

Thereupon, approaching the curtain behind which the man was concealed, Mme. de Saint-Dizier gave him the cue—after which she returned to her seat.

It is singular, but during the short space which preceded Adrienne's arrival, the different actors in this scene appeared uneasy and embarrassed, as if they had a vague fear of her coming. In about a minute, Mdlle. de Cardoville entered the presence of her aunt.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE SKIRMISH.

On entering, Mdlle. de Cardoville threw down upon a chair the gray beaver hat she had worn to cross the garden, and displayed her fine golden hair, falling on either side of her face in long, light ringlets, and twisted in a broad knot behind her head. She presented herself without boldness, but with perfect ease: her countenance was gay and smiling; her large black eyes appeared even more brilliant than usual. When she perceived Abbé d'Aigrigny, she started in surprise, and her rosy lips were just touched with a mocking smile.

After nodding graciously to the doctor, she passed Baron Tripeaud by without looking at him, and saluted the princess with stately obeisance, in the most fashionable style.

Though the walk and bearing of Mdlle. de Cardoville were extremely elegant, and full of propriety and truly feminine grace, there was about her an air of resolution and independence by no means common in women, and particularly in girls of her age. Her movements, without being abrupt, bore no traces of restraint, stiffness, or formality. They were frank and free as her character, full of life, youth, and freshness; and one could easily divine that so

buoyant, straightforward, and decided a nature had never been able to conform itself to the rules of an affected rigor.

Strangely enough, though he was a man of the world, a man of great talent, a churchman distinguished for his eloquence, and, above all, a person of influence and authority, Marquis d'Aigrigny experienced an involuntary, incredible, almost painful uneasiness, in presence of Adrienne de Cardoville. He—generally so much the master of himself, so accustomed to exercise great power—who (in the name of his Order) had often treated with crowned heads on the footing of an equal, felt himself abashed and lowered in the presence of this girl, as remarkable for her frankness as for her biting irony. Now, as men who are accustomed to impose their will upon others generally hate those who, far from submitting to their influence, hamper it and make sport of them, it was no great degree of affection that the marquis bore towards the Princess de Saint-Dizier's niece.

For a long time past, contrary to his usual habit, he had ceased to try upon Adrienne that fascinating address to which he had often owed an irresistible charm; towards her he had become dry, curt, serious, taking refuge in that icy sphere of haughty dignity and rigid austerity which completely hid all those amiable qualities with which he was endowed, and of which, in general, he made such efficient use. Adrienne was much amused at all this, and thereby showed her imprudence—for the most vulgar motives often engender the most implacable hatreds.

From these preliminary observations, the reader will understand the divers sentiments and interests which animated the different actors in the following scene.

Madame de Saint-Dizier was seated in a large arm-chair by one side of the hearth. Marquis d'Aigrigny was standing before the fire. Dr. Baleinier seated near a bureau, was again turning over the leaves of Baron Tripeaud's biography, whilst the baron appeared to be very attentively examining one of the pictures of sacred subjects suspended from the wall.

"You sent for me, aunt, to talk upon matters of importance?" said Adrienne, breaking the silence which had reigned in the reception-room since her entrance.

"Yes, madame," answered the princess, with a cold and severe mien; "upon matters of the gravest importance."

"I am at your service, aunt. Perhaps we had better walk into your library?"

"It is not necessary. We can talk here." Then, addressing the marquis, the doctor, and the baron, she said to them, "Pray, be seated, gentlemen," and they all took their places round the table.

"How can the subject of our interview interest these gentlemen, aunt?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville, with surprise.

"These gentlemen are old family friends; all that concerns you must interest them, and their advice ought to be heard and accepted by you with respect."

"I have no doubt, aunt, of the bosom friendship of M. d'Aigrigny for our family: I have still less of the profound and disinterested devotion of M. Tripeaud; M. Baleinier is one of my old friends; still, before accepting these gentlemen as spectators, or, if you will, as confidants of our interview, I wish to know what we are going to talk of before them."

"I thought that, among your many singular pretensions, you had at least those of frankness and courage."

"Really, aunt," said Adrienne, smiling with mock humility, "I have no more pretensions to frankness and courage than you have to sincerity and goodness. Let us admit, once for all, that we are what we are—without pretension."

"Be it so," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a dry tone; "I have long been accustomed to the freaks of your independent spirit. I suppose, then, that, courageous and frank as you say you are, you will not be afraid to speak before such grave and respectable persons as these gentlemen what you would speak to me alone?"

"Is it a formal examination that I am to submit to? if so, upon what subject?"

"It is not an examination: but, as I have a right to watch over you, and as you take advantage of my weak compliance with your caprices, I mean to put an end to what has lasted too long, and tell you my irrevocable resolutions for the future, in presence of friends of the family. And, first, you have hitherto had a very false and imperfect notion of my power over you."

"I assure you, aunt, that I have never had any notion, true or false, on the subject—for I have never even dreamt about it."

"That is my own fault; for, instead of yielding to your fancies, I should have made you sooner feel my authority; but the moment has come to submit yourself; the severe censures of my friends have enlightened me in time. Your

character is self-willed, independent, stubborn; it must change—either by fair means or by force, understand me, it *shall* change."

At these words, pronounced harshly before strangers, with a severity which did not seem at all justified by circumstances, Adrienne tossed her head proudly; but, restraining herself, she answered with a smile: "You say, aunt, that I shall change. I should not be astonished at it. We hear of such odd conversions."

The princess bit her lips.

"A sincere conversion can never be called odd, as you term it, madame," said Abbé d'Aigrigny, coldly. "It is, on the contrary, meritorious, and forms an excellent example."

"Excellent?" answered Adrienne: "that depends! For instance, what if one converts defects into vices?"

"What do you mean, madame?" cried the princess.

"I am speaking of myself, aunt; you reproach me of being independent and resolute—suppose I were to become hypocritical and wicked? In truth, I prefer keeping my dear little faults, which I love like spoiled children. I know what I am; I do not know what I might be."

"But you must acknowledge, Mdlle. Adrienne," said Baron Tripeaud, with a self-conceited and sententious air, "that a conversion——"

"I believe," said Adrienne, disdainfully, "that M. Tripeaud is well versed in the conversion of all sorts of property into all sorts of profit, by all sorts of means—but he knows nothing of this matter."

"But, madame," resumed the financier, gathering courage from a glance of the princess, "you forget that I have the honor to be your deputy guardian, and that——"

"It is true that M. Tripeaud has that honor," said Adrienne, with still more haughtiness, and not even looking at the baron; "I could never tell exactly why. But as it is not now the time to guess enigmas, I wish to know, aunt, the object and end of this meeting?"

"You shall be satisfied, madame. I will explain myself in a very clear and precise manner. You shall know the plan of conduct that you will have henceforth to pursue; and if you refuse to submit thereto, with the obedience and respect that is due to my orders, I shall at once see what course to take."

It is impossible to give an idea of the imperious tone and stern look of the princess, as she pronounced these words, which were calculated to startle a girl, until now accustomed

to live in a great measure as she pleased: yet, contrary perhaps to the expectation of Madame de Saint-Dizier, instead of answering impetuously, Adrienne looked her full in the face, and said, laughing: "This is a perfect declaration of war. It's becoming very amusing."

"We are not talking of declarations of war," said the Abbé d'Aigrigny, harshly, as if offended by the expressions of Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"Now, M. l'Abbé!" returned Adrienne, "for an old colonel, you are really too severe upon a jest!—you are so much indebted to 'war,' which gave you a French regiment after fighting so long against France—in order to learn, of course, the strength and the weakness of her enemies."

On these words, which recalled painful remembrances, the marquis colored; he was going to answer, but the princess exclaimed: "Really, madame, your behavior is quite intolerable!"

"Well, aunt, I acknowledge I was wrong. I ought not to have said this is very amusing—for it is not so, at all; but it is at least very curious—and perhaps," added the young girl, after a moment's silence, "perhaps very audacious—and audacity pleases me. As we are upon this subject, and you talk of a plan of conduct to which I must conform myself, under pain of (interrupting herself)—under pain of what, I should like to know, aunt?"

"You shall know. Proceed."

"I will, in the presence of these gentlemen, also declare, in a very plain and precise manner, the determination that I have come to. As it required some time to prepare for its execution, I have not spoken of it sooner, for you know I am not in the habit of saying, 'I will do so and so!' but I do it."

"Certainly; and it is just this habit of culpable independence of which you must break yourself."

"Well, I had intended only to inform you of my determination at a later period; but I cannot resist the pleasure of doing so to-day, you seem so well disposed to hear and receive it. Still, I would beg of you to speak first: it may just so happen, that our views are precisely the same."

"I like better to see you thus," said the princess. "I acknowledge at least the courage of your pride, and your defiance of all authority. You speak of audacity—yours is indeed great."

"I am at least decided to do that which others in their weakness dare not—but which I dare. This, I hope, is clear and precise."

"Very clear, very precise," said the princess, exchanging a glance of satisfaction with the other actors in this scene. "The positions being thus established, matters will be much simplified. I have only to give you notice, in your own interest, that this is a very serious affair—much more so than you imagine—and that the only way to dispose me to indulgence, is to substitute, for the habitual arrogance and irony of your language, the modesty and respect becoming a young lady."

Adrienne smiled, but made no reply. Some moments of silence, and some rapid glances exchanged between the princess and her three friends, showed that these encounters, more or less brilliant in themselves, were to be followed by a serious combat.

Mdlle. de Cardoville had too much penetration and sagacity, not to remark, that the Princess de Saint-Dizier attached the greatest importance to this decisive interview. But she could not understand how her aunt could hope to impose her absolute will upon her: the threat of coercive measures appearing with reason a mere ridiculous menace. Yet, knowing the vindictive character of her aunt, the secret power at her disposal, and the terrible vengeance she had sometimes exacted—reflecting, moreover, that men in the position of the marquis and the doctor would not have come to attend this interview without some weighty motive—the young lady paused for a moment before she plunged into the strife.

But soon, the very presentiment of some vague danger, far from weakening her, gave her new courage to brave the worst, to exaggerate, if that were possible, the independence of her ideas, and uphold, come what might, the determination that she was about to signify to the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

CHAPTER XL.

THE REVOLT.

"Madame," said the princess to Adrienne de Cardoville, in a cold, severe tone, "I owe it to myself, as well as to these gentlemen, to recapitulate, in a few words, the events that have taken place for some time past. Six months ago, at the end of the mourning for your father, you, being eighteen

years old, asked for the management of your fortune, and for emancipation from control. Unfortunately, I had the weakness to consent. You quitted the house, and established yourself in the extension, far from all superintendence. Then began a train of expenditures, each one more extravagant than the last. Instead of being satisfied with one or two waiting-women, taken from that class from which they are generally selected, you chose governesses for lady-companions, whom you dressed in the most ridiculous and costly fashion. It is true, that, in the solitude of your pavilion, you yourself chose to wear, one after another, costumes of different ages. Your foolish fancies and unreasonable whims have been without end and without limit: not only have you never fulfilled your religious duties, but you have actually had the audacity to profane one of your rooms, by rearing in the centre of it a species of pagan altar, on which is a group in marble representing a youth and a girl"—the princess uttered these words as if they would burn her lips—"a work of art, if you will, but a work in the highest degree unsuitable to a person of your age. You pass whole days entirely secluded in your pavilion, refusing to see any one; and Dr. Baleinier, the only one of my friends in whom you seem to have retained some confidence, having succeeded by much persuasion in gaining admittance, has frequently found you in so very excited a state, that he has felt seriously uneasy with regard to your health. You have always insisted on going out alone, without rendering any account of your actions to any one. You have taken delight in opposing, in every possible way, your will to my authority. Is all this true?"

"The picture of my past is not much flattered," said Adrienne, smiling, "but it is not altogether unlike."

"So you admit, madame," said Abbé d'Aigrigny, laying stress on his words, "that all the facts stated by your aunt are scrupulously true?"

Every eye was turned towards Adrienne, as if her answer would be of extreme importance.

"Yes, M. l'Abbé," said she; "I live openly enough to render this question superfluous."

"These facts are therefore admitted," said Abbé d'Aigrigny, turning towards the doctor and the baron.

"These facts are completely established," said M. Tripeaud, in a pompous voice.

"Will you tell me, aunt," asked Adrienne, "what is the good of this long preamble?"

"This long preamble, madame," resumed the princess with dignity, "exposes the past in order to justify the future."

"Really, aunt, such mysterious proceedings are a little in the style of the answers of the Cumæan Sybil. They must be intended to cover something formidable."

"Perhaps, mademoiselle—for to certain characters nothing is so formidable as duty and obedience. Your character is one of those inclined to revolt——"

"I freely acknowledge it, aunt—and it will always be so, until duty and obedience come to me in a shape that I can respect and love."

"Whether you respect and love my orders or not, madame," said the princess, in a curt, harsh voice, "you will, from to-day, from this moment, learn to submit blindly and absolutely to my will. In one word, you will do nothing without my permission: it is necessary, I insist upon it, and so I am determined it shall be."

Adrienne looked at her aunt for a second, and then burst into so free and sonorous a laugh, that it rang for quite a time through the vast apartment. D'Aigrigny and Baron Tripeaud started in indignation. The princess looked angrily at her niece. The doctor raised his eyes to heaven, and clasped his hands over his waistcoat with a sanctimonious sigh.

"Madame," said Abbé d'Aigrigny, "such fits of laughter are highly unbecoming. Your aunt's words are serious, and deserve a different reception."

"Oh, sir!" said Adrienne, recovering herself, "it is not my fault if I laugh. How can I maintain my gravity, when I hear my aunt talking of blind submission to her orders? Is the swallow, accustomed to fly upwards and enjoy the sunshine, fledged to live with the mole in darkness?"

At this answer, D'Aigrigny affected to stare at the other members of this kind of family council with blank astonishment.

"A swallow? what does she mean?" asked the abbé of the baron, making a sign, which the latter understood.

"I do not know," answered Tripeaud, staring in his turn at the doctor. "She spoke too of a mole. It is quite unheard-of—incomprehensible."

"And so, madame," said the princess, appearing to share in the surprise of the others, "this is the reply that you make to me?"

"Certainly," answered Adrienne, astonished herself that

they should pretend not to understand the simile of which she had made use, accustomed as she was to speak in figurative language.

"Come, come, madame," said Dr. Baleinier, smiling good-humoredly, "we must be indulgent. My dear Mdlle. Adrienne has naturally so uncommon and excitable a nature! She is really the most charming mad woman I know; I have told her so a hundred times, in my position of an old friend, which allows such freedom."

"I can conceive that your attachment makes you indulgent—but it is not the less true, doctor," said D'Aigrigny, as if reproaching him for taking the part of Mdlle. de Cardoville, "that such answers to serious questions are most extravagant."

"The evil is, that mademoiselle does not seem to comprehend the serious nature of this conference," said the princess, harshly. "She will perhaps understand it better when I have given her my orders."

"Let us hear these orders, aunt," replied Adrienne, as, seated on the other side of the table, opposite to the princess, she leaned her small, dimpled chin in the hollow of her pretty hand, with an air of graceful mockery, charming to behold.

"From to-morrow forward," resumed the princess, "you will quit the summer-house which you at present inhabit, you will discharge your women, and come and occupy two rooms in this house, to which there will be no access except through my apartment. You will never go out alone. You will accompany me to the services of the church. Your emancipation terminates, in consequence of your prodigality duly proven. I will take charge of all your expenses, even to the ordering of your clothes, so that you may be properly and modestly dressed. Until your majority (which will be indefinitely postponed, by means of the intervention of a family-council), you will have no money at your own disposal. Such is my resolution."

"And certainly your resolution can only be applauded, madame," said Baron Tripeaud; "we can but encourage you to show the greatest firmness, for such disorders must have an end."

"It is more than time to put a stop to such scandals," added the abbé.

"Eccentricity and exaltation of temperament—may excuse many things," ventured to observe the smooth-tongued doctor.

"No doubt," replied the princess dryly to Balcinier, who played his part to perfection; "but then, doctor, the requisite measures must be taken with such characters."

Madame de Saint-Dizier had expressed herself in a firm and precise manner; she appeared convinced of the possibility of putting her threats into execution. M. Tripeaud and D'Aigrigny had just now given their full consent to the words of the princess. Adrienne began to perceive that something very serious was in contemplation, and her gayety was at once replaced by an air of bitter irony and offended independence.

She rose abruptly, and colored a little; her rosy nostrils dilated, her eyes flashed fire, and, as she raised her head, she gently shook the fine, wavy, golden hair, with a movement of pride that was natural to her. After a moment's silence, she said to her aunt in a cutting tone: "You have spoken of the past, madame; I also will speak a few words concerning it, since you force me to do so, though I may regret the necessity. I quitted your dwelling, because it was impossible for me to live longer in this atmosphere of dark hypocrisy and black treachery."

"Madame," said D'Aigrigny, "such words are as violent as they are unreasonable."

"Since you interrupt me, sir," said Adrienne, hastily, as she fixed her eyes on the abbé, "tell me what examples did I meet with in my aunt's house?"

"Excellent examples, madame."

"Excellent, sir? Was it because I saw there, every day, her conversion keep pace with your own?"

"Madame, you forget yourself!" cried the princess, becoming pale with rage.

"Madame, I do not forget—I remember, like other people; that is all. I had no relation of whom I could ask an asylum. I wished to live alone. I wished to enjoy my revenues—because I chose rather to spend them myself, than to see them wasted by M. Tripeaud."

"Madame," cried the baron, "I cannot imagine how you can presume——"

"Sir!" said Adrienne, reducing him to silence by a gesture of overwhelming lordliness, "I speak of you—not to you. I wished to spend my income," she continued, "according to my own tastes. I embellished the retreat that I had chosen. Instead of ugly, ill-taught servants, I selected girls, pretty and well brought up, though poor. Their education forbade their being subjected to any humiliating servitude, though I

have endeavored to make their situation easy and agreeable. They do not serve me, but render me service—I pay them, but I am obliged to them—nice distinctions that your highness will not understand, I know. Instead of seeing them badly or ungracefully dressed, I have given them clothes that suit their charming faces well, because I like whatever is young and fair. Whether I dress myself one way or the other, concerns only my looking-glass. I go out alone, because I like to follow my fancy. I do not go to mass—but, if I had still a mother, I would explain to her my devotions, and she would kiss me none the less tenderly. It is true, that I have raised a pagan altar to youth and beauty, because I adore God in all that He has made fair and good, noble and grand—because, morn and evening, my heart repeats the fervent and sincere prayer: "Thanks, my Creator! thanks!"—Your highness says that M. Baleinier has often found me in my solitude, a prey to a strange excitement: yes, it is true; for it is then that, escaping in thought from all that renders the present odious and painful to me, I find refuge in the future—it is then that magical horizons spread far before me—it is then that such splendid visions appear to me, as make me feel myself rapt in a sublime and heavenly ecstasy, as if I no longer appertained to earth!"

As Adrienne pronounced these last words with enthusiasm, her countenance appeared transfigured, so resplendent did it become. In that moment, she had lost sight of all that surrounded her.

"It is then," she resumed, with spirit soaring higher and higher, "that I breathe a pure air, reviving and free—yes, free—above all, free—and so salubrious, so grateful to the soul!—Yes, instead of seeing my sisters painfully submit to a selfish, humiliating, brutal dominion, which entails upon them the seductive vices of slavery, the graceful fraud, the enchanting perfidy, the caressing falsehood, the contemptuous resignation, the hateful obedience—I behold them, my noble sisters! worthy and sincere because they are free, faithful and devoted because they have liberty to choose—neither imperious nor base, because they have no master to govern or to flatter—cherished and respected, because they can withdraw from a disloyal hand their hand, loyally bestowed. Oh, my sisters! my sisters! I feel it. These are not merely consoling visions—they are sacred hopes."

Carried away, in spite of herself, by the excitement of her feelings, Adrienne paused for a moment, in order to return to earth; she did not perceive that the other actors

in this scene were looking at each other with an air of delight.

"What she says there is excellent," murmured the doctor in the princess's ear, next to whom he was seated; "were she in league with us, she would not speak differently."

"It is only by excessive harshness," added D'Aigrigny, "that we shall bring her to the desired point."

But it seemed as if the vexed emotion of Adrienne had been dissipated by the contact of the generous sentiments she had just uttered. Addressing Baleinier with a smile, she said: "I must own, doctor, that there is nothing more ridiculous, than to yield to the current of certain thoughts, in the presence of persons incapable of understanding them. This would give you a fine opportunity to make game of that exaltation of mind for which you sometimes reproach me. To let myself be carried away by transports at so serious a moment!—for, verily, the matter in hand seems to be serious. But you see, good M. Baleinier, when an idea comes into my head, I can no more help following it out, than I could refrain from running after butterflies when I was a little girl."

"And heaven only knows whither these brilliant butterflies of all colors," said M. Baleinier, smiling with an air of paternal indulgence, "that are passing through your brain, are likely to lead you. Oh, madcap, when will she be as reasonable as she is charming?"

"This very instant, my good doctor," replied Adrienne. "I am about to cast off my reveries for realities, and speak plain and positive language, as you shall hear."

Upon which, addressing her aunt, she continued: "You have imparted to me your resolution, madame; I will now tell you mine. Within a week, I shall quit the pavilion that I inhabit, for a house which I have arranged to my taste, where I shall live after my own fashion. I have neither father nor mother, and I owe no account of my actions to any but myself."

"Upon my word, mademoiselle," said the princess, shrugging her shoulders, "you talk nonsense. You forget that society has inalienable moral rights, which we are bound to enforce. And we shall not neglect them, depend upon it."

"So, madame, it is you, and M. d'Aigrigny, and M. Tripeaud, that represent the morality of society! This appears to me very fine. Is it because M. Tripeaud has considered (I must acknowledge it) my fortune as his own? Is it because——"

"Now, really, madame," began Tripeaud.

"In good time, madame," said Adrienne to her aunt, without noticing the baron, "as the occasion offers, I shall have to ask you for explanations with regard to certain interests, which have hitherto, I think, been concealed from me.

These words of Adrienne made D'Aigrigny and the princess start, and then rapidly exchange a glance of uneasiness and anxiety. Adrienne did not seem to perceive it, but thus continued: "To have done with your demands, madame, here is my final resolve. I shall live where and how I please. I think that, if I were a man, no one would impose on me, at my age, the harsh and humiliating guardianship you have in view, for living as I have lived till now —honestly, freely, and generously, in the sight of all."

"This idea is absurd! is madness!" cried the princess. "To wish to live thus alone, is to carry immorality and immodesty to their utmost limits."

"If so, madame," said Adrienne, "what opinion must you entertain of so many poor girls, orphans like myself, who live alone and free, as I wish to live? They have not received, as I have, a refined education, calculated to raise the soul, and purify the heart. They have not wealth, as I have, to protect them from the evil temptations of misery; and yet they live honestly and proudly in their distress."

"Vice and virtue do not exist for such tag-rag vermin!" cried Baron Tripeaud, with an expression of anger and hideous disdain.

"Madame, you would turn away a lackey, that would venture to speak thus before you," said Adrienne to her aunt, unable to conceal her disgust, "and yet you oblige me to listen to such speeches!"

The Marquis d'Aigrigny touched M. Tripeaud with his knee under the table, to remind him that he must not express himself in the princess's parlors in the same manner as he would in the lobbies of the Exchange. To repair the baron's coarseness, the abbé thus continued: "There is no comparison, mademoiselle, between people of the class you name, and a young lady of your rank."

"For a Catholic priest, M. l'Abbé, that distinction is not very Christian," replied Adrienne.

"I know the purport of my words, madame," answered the abbé, dryly; "besides the independent life that you wish to lead, in opposition to all reason, may tend to very serious consequences for you. Your family may one day wish to see you married——"

"I will spare my family that trouble, sir; if I marry at

all, I will choose for myself, which also appears to me reasonable enough. But, in truth, I am very little tempted by that heavy chain, which selfishness and brutality rivet for ever about our necks."

"It is indecent, madame," said the princess, to speak so lightly of such an institution."

"Before you, especially, madame, I beg pardon for having shocked your highness! You fear that my independent manner of living will frighten away all wooers; but that is another reason for persisting in my independence, for I detest wooers. I only hope that they may have the very worst opinion of me, and there is no better means of effecting that object, than to appear to live as they live themselves I rely upon my whims, my follies, my sweet faults, to preserve me from the annoyance of any matrimonial hunting."

"You will be quite satisfied on that head," resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier, "if unfortunately the report should gain credit, that you have carried the forgetfulness of all duty and decency, to such a height, as to return home at eight o'clock in the morning. So I am told is the case—but I cannot bring myself to believe such an enormity."

"You are wrong, madame, for it is quite true."

"So you confess it?" cried the princess.

"I confess all that I do, madame. I came home this morning at eight o'clock."

"You hear gentlemen?" ejaculated the princess.

"Oh!" said M. d'Aigrigny, in a bass voice.

"Ah!" said the baron, in a treble key.

"Oh!" muttered the doctor, with a deep sigh.

On hearing these lamentable exclamations, Adrienne seemed about to speak, perhaps to justify herself; but her lip speedily assumed a curl of contempt, which showed that she disdained to stoop to any explanation.

"So it is true," said the princess. "Oh, wretched girl, you had accustomed me to be astonished at nothing; but, nevertheless, I doubted the possibility of such conduct. It required your impudent and audacious reply to convince me of the fact."

"Madame, lying has always appeared to me more impudent than to speak the truth."

"And where had you been, madame? and for what?"

"Madame," said Adrienne, interrupting her aunt, "I never speak false—but neither do I speak more than I choose; and then again, it were cowardice to defend myself from a revolting accusation. Let us say no more about it:

your importunities on this head will be altogether vain. To resume: you wish to impose upon me a harsh and humiliating restraint; I wish to quit the house I inhabit, to go and live where I please, at my own fancy. Which of us two will yield, remains to be seen. Now for another matter: this mansion belongs to me! As I am about to leave it, I am indifferent whether you continue to live here or not; but the ground floor is uninhabited. It contains, besides the reception-rooms, two complete sets of apartments; I have let them for some time."

"Indeed!" said the princess, looking at D'Aigrigny with intense surprise. "And to whom," she added ironically, "have you disposed of them?"

"To three members of my family."

"What does all this mean?" said Mme. de Saint-Dizier, more and more astonished.

"I means, madame, that I wish to offer a generous hospitality to a young Indian prince, my kinsman on my mother's side. He will arrive in two or three days, and I wish to have the rooms ready to receive him."

"You hear, gentlemen?" said D'Aigrigny to the doctor and Tripeaud, with an affectation of profound stupor.

"It surpasses all one could imagine!" exclaimed the baron.

"Alas!" observed the doctor, benignantly, "the impulse is generous in itself—but the mad little head crops out?"

"Excellent!" said the princess. "I cannot prevent you, madame, from announcing the most extravagant designs; but it is presumable that you will not stop short in so fair a path. Is that all?"

"Not quite, your highness. I learned this morning, that two of my female relations, also on my mother's side—poor children of fifteen—orphan daughters of Marshal Simon arrived yesterday from a long journey, and are now with the wife of the brave soldier who brought them to France from the depths of Siberia."

At these words from Adrienne, D'Aigrigny and the princess could not help starting suddenly, and staring at each other with affright, so far were they from expecting that Mdlle. de Cardoville was informed of the coming of Marshal Simon's daughters. This discovery was like a thunder-clap to them.

"You are no doubt astonished at seeing me so well informed," said Adrienne; "fortunately, before I have done, I hope to astonish you still more. But to return to these daughters of Marshal Simon: your highness will under-

stand, that it is impossible for me to leave them in charge of the good people who have afforded them a temporary asylum. Though this family is honest, and hard-working, it is not the place for them. I shall go and fetch them hither, and lodge them in apartments on the ground-floor, along with the soldier's wife, who will do very well to take care of them."

Upon these words, D'Aigrigny and the baron looked at each other, and the baron exclaimed: "Decidedly, she's out of her head."

Without a word to Tripeaud, Adrienne continued: "Marshal Simon cannot fail to arrive at Paris shortly. Your highness perceives how pleasant it will be, to be able to present his daughters to him, and prove that they have been treated as they deserve. To-morrow morning I shall send for milliners and mantua makers, so that they may want for nothing. I desire their surprised father, on his return, to find them every way beautiful. They are pretty, I am told, as angels—but I will endeavor to make little Cupids of them."

"At last, madame, you must have finished?" said the princess, in a sardonic and deeply irritated tone, whilst D'Aigrigny, calm and cold in appearance, could hardly dissemble his mental anguish.

"Try again!" continued the princess, addressing Adrienne. "Are there no more relations that you wish to add to this interesting family-group? Really a queen could not act with more magnificence."

"Right! I wish to give my family a royal reception—such as is due to the son of a king, and the daughters of the Duke de Ligny. It is well to unite other luxuries of life with the luxury of the hospitable heart."

"The maxim is assuredly generous," said the princess, becoming more and more agitated; "it is only a pity that you do not possess the mines of El Dorado to make it practicable."

"It was on the subject of a mine, said to be a rich one, that I also wished to speak to your highness. Could I find a better opportunity? Though my fortune is already considerable, it is nothing to what may come to our family at any moment. You will perhaps excuse, therefore, what you are pleased to call my royal prodigalities."

D'Aigrigny's dilemma became momentarily more and more thorny. The affair of the medals was so important, that he had concealed it even from Dr. Beleinier, though he

had called in his services to forward immense interests. Neither had Tripeaud been informed of it, for the princess believed that she had destroyed every vestige of those papers of Adrienne's father, which might have put him on the scent of this discovery. The abbé, therefore, was not only greatly alarmed that Mdlle. de Cardoville might be informed of this secret, but he trembled lest she should divulge it.

The princess, sharing the alarms of D'Aigrigny, interrupted her niece by exclaiming: "Madame, there are certain family affairs which ought to be kept secret, and, without exactly understanding to what you allude, I must request you to change the subject."

"What, madame! are we not here a family party? Is that not sufficiently evident by the somewhat ungracious things that have been here said?"

"No matter, madame! when affairs of interest are concerned, which are more or less disputable, it is perfectly useless to speak of them without the documents laid before every one."

"And of what have we been speaking this hour, madame, if not of affairs of interest? I really do not understand your surprise and embarrassment."

"I am neither surprised nor embarrassed, madame; but for the last two hours, you have obliged me to listen to so many new and extravagant things, that a little amaze is very permissible."

"I beg your highness's pardon, but you are very much embarrassed," said Adrienne, looking fixedly at her aunt, "and M. d'Aigrigny also—which confirms certain suspicions that I have not had the time to clear up. Have I then guessed rightly?" she added, after a pause. "We will see——"

"Madame, I command you to be silent," cried the princess, no longer mistress of herself.

"Oh, madame!" said Adrienne, "for a person who has in general so much command of her feelings, you compromise yourself strangely."

Providence (as some will have it) came to the aid of the princess and the Abbé d'Aigrigny at this critical juncture. A valet entered the room; his countenance bore such marks of fright and agitation, that the princess exclaimed as soon as she saw him: "Why, Dubois! what is the matter?"

"I have to beg pardon, your highness, for interrupting you against your express orders, but a police inspector demands to speak with you instantly. He is below stairs, and the yard is full of policemen and soldiers."

Notwithstanding the profound surprise which this new incident occasioned her, the princess, determining to profit by the opportunity thus afforded, to concert prompt measures with D'Aigrigny on the subject of Adrienne's threatened revelations, rose, and said to the abbé: "Will you be so obliging as to accompany me, M. d'Aigrigny, for I do not know what the presence of this commissary of police may signify."

D'Aigrigny followed the speaker into the next room.

CHAPTER XLI.

TREACHERY.

The Princess de Saint-Dizier, accompanied by D'Aigrigny, and followed by the servants, stopped short in the next room to that in which had remained Adrienne, Tripeaud and the doctor.

"Where is the commissary?" asked the princess of the servant, who had just before announced to her the arrival of that magistrate."

"In the blue saloon, madame."

"My compliments, and beg him to wait for me a few moments."

The man bowed and withdrew. As soon as he was gone, Madame de Saint-Dizier approached hastily M. d'Aigrigny, whose countenance, usually firm and haughty, was now pale and agitated.

"You see," cried the princess in a hurried voice, "Adrienne knows all. What shall we do?—what?"

"I cannot tell," said the abbé, with a fixed and absent look. "This disclosure is a terrible blow to us."

"Is all, then, lost?"

"There is only one means of safety," said M. d'Aigrigny; —"the doctor."

"But how?" cried the princess. "So, sudden? this very day?"

"Two hours hence, it will be too late; ere then, this infernal girl will have seen Marshal Simon's daughters."

"But—Frederick!—it is impossible! M. Baleinier will never consent. I ought to have been prepared beforehand—as we intended, after to-day's examination."

"No matter," replied the abbé, quickly; "the doctor must try at any hazard."

"But under what pretext?"

"I will try and find one."

"Suppose you were to find a pretext, Frederick, and we could act immediately—nothing would be ready down there."

"Be satisfied: they are always ready there, by habitual foresight."

"How instruct the doctor on the instant?" resumed the princess.

"To send for him would be to rouse the suspicions of your niece," said M. d'Aigrigny, thoughtfully; "and we must avoid that before everything."

"Of course," answered the princess; "her confidence in the doctor is one of our greatest resources."

"There is a way," said the abbé quickly; "I will write a few words in haste to Baleinier; one of your people can take the note to him, as if it came from without—from a patient dangerously ill."

"An excellent idea!" cried the princess. "You are right. Here upon this table—there is everything necessary for writing. Quick! quick—But will the doctor succeed?"

"In truth, I scarcely dare to hope it," said the marquis, sitting down at the table with repressed rage. "Thanks to this examination, going beyond our hopes, which our man, hidden behind the curtain, has faithfully taken down in shorthand—thanks to the violent scenes, which would necessarily have occurred to-morrow and the day after—the doctor, by fencing himself round with all sorts of clever precautions, would have been able to act with the most complete certainty. But to ask this of him to-day, on the instant!—Herminia—it is folly to think of!"—The marquis threw down the pen which he held in his hand; then he added, in a tone of bitter and profound irritation: "At the very moment of success—to see all our hopes destroyed!—Oh, the consequences of all this are incalculable. Your niece will be the cause of the greatest mischief—oh! the greatest injury to us."

It is impossible to describe the expression of deep rage and implacable hatred with which D'Aigrigny uttered these last words.

"Frederick," cried the princess with anxiety, as she clasped her hands strongly around the abbé's, "I conjure you, do not despair!—The doctor is fertile in resources,

and he is *so* devoted to us. Let us at least make the attempt."

"Well—it is at least a chance," said the abbé, taking up the pen again.

"Should it come to the worst," said the princess, "and Adrienne go this evening to fetch General Simon's daughters, she may perhaps no longer find them."

"We cannot hope for that. It is impossible that Rodin's orders should have been so quickly executed. We should have been informed of it."

"It is true. Write then to the doctor; I will send you Dubois, to carry your letter. Courage, Frederick! we shall yet be too much for that ungovernable girl." Madame de Saint-Dizier added, with concentrated rage: "Oh, Adrienne! Adrienne! you shall pay dearly for your insolent sarcasms, and the anxiety you have caused us."

As she went out, the princess turned towards M. d'Aigrigny, and said to him: "Wait for me here. I will tell you the meaning of this visit of the police, and we will go in together."

The princess disappeared. D'Aigrigny dashed off a few words, with a trembling hand.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE SNARE.

After the departure of Madame de Saint-Dizier and the marquis, Adrienne had remained in her aunt's apartment with M. Baleinier and Baron Tripeaud.

On hearing of the commissary's arrival, Mdlle. de Cardoville had felt considerable uneasiness; for there could be no doubt that, as Agricola had apprehended, this magistrate was come to search the hotel and extension, in order to find the smith, whom he believed to be concealed there.

Though she looked upon Agricola's hiding-place as a very safe one, Adrienne was not quite tranquil on his account; so in the event of any unfortunate accident, she thought it a good opportunity to recommend the refugee to the doctor, an intimate friend, as we have said, of one of the most influential ministers of the day. So, drawing near to the physician, who was conversing in a low voice with the baron, she said to him in her softest and most coaxing manner: "My

good M. Baleinier, I wish to speak a few words with you." She pointed to the deep recess of one of the windows.

"I am at your orders, madame," answered the doctor, as he rose to follow Adrienne to the recess.

M. Tripeaud, who, no longer sustained by the abbé's presence, dreaded the young lady as he did fire, was not sorry for this diversion. To keep up appearances, he stationed himself before one of the sacred pictures, and began again to contemplate it, as if there were no bounds to his admiration.

When Mdlle. de Cardoville was far enough from the baron, not to be overheard by him, she said to the physician, who, all smiles and benevolence, waited for her to explain: "My good doctor, you are my friend, as you were my father's. Just now, notwithstanding the difficulty of your position, you had the courage to show yourself my only partisan."

"Not at all, madame; do not go and say such things!" cried the doctor, affecting a pleasant kind of anger. "Plague on't! you would get me into a pretty scrape; so pray be silent on that subject. *Vade retro Satanas!*—which means: Get thee behind me, charming little demon that you are!"

"Do not be afraid," answered Adrienne, with a smile; "I will not compromise you. Only allow me to remind you, that you have often made me offers of service, and spoken to me of your devotion."

"Put me to the test—and you will see if I do not keep my promises."

"Well, then! give me a proof on the instant," said Adrienne, quickly.

"Capital! this is how I like to be taken at my word What can I do for you?"

"Are you still very intimate with your friend the minister?"

"Yes; I am just treating him for a loss of voice, which he always has, the day they put questions to him in the house. He likes it better.

"I want you to obtain from him something very important for me."

"For you? pray, what is it?"

At this instant, the valet entered the room, delivered a letter to M. Baleinier, and said to him: "A footman has just brought this letter for you, sir; it is very pressing."

The physician took the letter, and the servant went out.

"This is one of the inconveniences of merit," said Adrienne, smiling; "they do not leave you a moment's rest, my poor doctor."

"Do not speak of it, madame," said the physician, who could not conceal a start of amazement, as he recognized the writing of D'Aigrigny; "these patients think we are made of iron, and have monopolized the health which they so much need. They have really no mercy. With your permission, madame," added M. Baleinier, looking at Adrienne before he unsealed the letter.

Mdlle. de Cardoville answered by a graceful nod. Marquis d'Aigrigny's letter was not long; the doctor read it at a single glance, and, notwithstanding his habitual prudence, he shrugged his shoulders, and said hastily: "To-day!—why, it's impossible. He is mad."

"You speak no doubt of some poor patient, who has placed all his hopes in you—who waits and calls for you at this moment. Come, my dear M. Baleinier, do not reject his prayer. It is so sweet to justify the confidence we inspire."

There was at once so much analogy, and such contradiction, between the object of this letter, written just before by Adrienne's most implacable enemy, and these words of commiseration which she spoke in a touching voice, that Dr. Baleinier himself could not help being struck with it. He looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with an almost embarrassed air, as he replied: "I am indeed speaking of one of my patients, who counts much upon me—a great deal too much—for he asks me to do an impossibility. But why do you feel so interested in an unknown person?"

"If he is unfortunate, I know enough to interest me. The person for whom I ask your assistance with the minister, was quite as little known to me; and now I take the deepest interest in him. I must tell you, that he is the son of the worthy soldier who brought Marshal Simon's daughters from the heart of Siberia."

"What! he is——"

"An honest workman, the support of his family; but I must tell you all about it—this is how the affair took place."

The confidential communication which Adrienne was going to make to the doctor, was cut short by Madame Saint-Dizier, who, followed by M. d'Aigrigny, opened abruptly the door. An expression of infernal joy, hardly concealed beneath a semblance of extreme indignation, was visible in her countenance.

M. d'Aigrigny threw rapidly, as he entered the apartment, an inquiring and anxious glance at M. Baleinier. The doctor answered by a shake of the head. The abbé bit his lips with silent rage; he had built his last hopes upon the

doctor, and his projects seemed now forever annihilated, notwithstanding the new blow which the princess had in reserve for Adrienne.

"Gentlemen," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a sharp, hurried voice, for she was nearly choking with wicked pleasure, "gentlemen, pray be seated! I have some new and curious things to tell you, on the subject of this young lady" She pointed to her niece, with a look of ineffable hatred and disdain.

"My poor child, what is the matter now?" said M. Baleinier, in a soft, wheedling tone, before he left the window where he was standing with Adrienne. "Whatever happens, count upon me!"—And the physician went to seat himself between M. d'Aigrigny and M. Tripeaud.

At her aunt's insolent address, Mdlle. de Cardoville had proudly lifted her head. The blood rushed to her face, and irritated at the new attacks with which she was menaced, she advanced to the table where the princess was seated, and said in an agitated voice to M. Baleinier: "I shall expect you to call on me as soon as possible, my dear doctor. You know that I wish particularly to speak with you."

Adrienne made one step towards the arm-chair, on which she had left her hat. The princess rose abruptly, and exclaimed: "What are you doing, madame?"

"I am about to retire. Your highness has expressed to me your will, and I have told you mine. It is enough."

She took her hat. Madame de Saint-Dizier, seeing her prey about to escape, hastened towards her niece, and, in defiance of all propriety, seized her violently by the arm with a convulsive grasp, and bade her, "Remain!"

"Fie, madame!" exclaimed Adrienne, with an accent of painful contempt, "have we sunk so low?"

"You wish to escape—you are afraid!" resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier, looking at her disdainfully from head to foot.

With these words "you are afraid," you could have made Adrienne de Cardoville walk into a fiery furnace. Disengaging her arm from her aunt's grasp, with a gesture full of nobleness and pride, she threw down the hat upon the chair, and, returning to the table, said imperiously to the princess: "There is something even stronger than the disgust with which all this inspires me—the fear of being accused of cowardice. Go on, madame! I am listening!"

With her head raised, her color somewhat heightened, her glance half veiled by a tear of indignation, her arms

folded over her bosom, which heaved in spite of herself with deep emotion, and her little foot beating convulsively on the carpet, Adrienne looked steadily at her aunt. The princess wished to infuse, drop by drop, the poison with which she was swelling, and make her victim suffer as long as possible, feeling certain that she could not escape. "Gentlemen," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a forced voice, "this has occurred: I was told that the commissary of police wished to speak with me; I went to receive this magistrate; he excused himself, with a troubled air, for the nature of the duty he had to perform. A man, against whom a warrant was out, had been seen to enter the garden-house."

Adrienne started; there could be no doubt that Agricola was meant. But she recovered her tranquillity, when she thought of the security of the hiding-place she had given him.

"The magistrate," continued the princess, "asked my consent to search the hotel and extension, to discover this man. It was his right. I begged him to commence with the garden-house, and accompanied him. Notwithstanding the improper conduct of Mademoiselle, it never, I confess, entered my head for a moment, that she was in any way mixed up with this police business. I was deceived."

"What do you mean, madame?" cried Adrienne.

"You shall know all, madame," said the princess, with a triumphant air, "in good time. You were in rather too great a hurry just now, to show yourself so proud and satirical. Well! I accompanied the commissary in his search; we came to the summer-house; I leave you to imagine the stupor and astonishment of the magistrate, on seeing three creatures dressed up like actresses. At my request, the fact was noted in the official report; for it is well to reveal such extravagances to all whom it may concern."

"The princess acted very wisely," said Tripeaud, bowing; "it is well that the authorities should be informed of such matters."

Adrienne, too much interested in the fate of the workman to think of answering Tripeaud or the princess, listened in silence, and strove to conceal her uneasiness.

"The magistrate," resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier, "began by a severe examination of these young girls, to learn if any man had, with their knowledge, been introduced into the house; with incredible effrontery, they answered that they had seen nobody enter."

"The true-hearted, honest girls!" thought Mademoiselle

de Cardoville, full of joy; "the poor workman is safe! the protection of Dr. Baleinier will do the rest."

"Fortunately," continued the princess, "one of my women, Mrs. Grivois, had accompanied me. This excellent person, remembering to have seen Mademoiselle return home at eight o'clock in the morning, remarked with much simplicity to the magistrate, that the man, whom they sought, might probably have entered by the little garden gate, left open, accidentally, by Mademoiselle."

"It would have been well, madame," said Tripeaud, "to have caused to be noted also in the report, that Mademoiselle had returned home at eight o'clock in the morning."

"I do not see the necessity for this," said the doctor, faithful to his part: "it would have been quite foreign to the search carried on by the commissary."

"But, doctor," said Tripeaud.

"But, baron," resumed M. Baleinier, in a firm voice, "that is my opinion."

"It was not mine, doctor," said the princess; "like M. Tripeaud, I considered it important to establish the fact by an entry in the report, and I saw, by the confused and troubled countenance of the magistrate, how painful it was to register the scandalous conduct of a young person placed in so high a position in society."

"Certainly, madame," said Adrienne, losing patience, "I believe your modesty to be about equal to that of this candid commissary of police; but it seems to me, that your mutual innocence was alarmed a little too soon. You might, and ought to have reflected, that there was nothing extraordinary in my coming home at eight o'clock, if I had gone out at six."

"The excuse, though somewhat tardy, is at least cunning," said the princess, spitefully.

"I do not excuse myself, madame," said Adrienne; "but as M. Baleinier has been kind enough to speak a word in my favor, I give the possible interpretation of a fact, which it would not become me to explain in your presence."

"The fact will stand, however, in the report," said Tripeaud, "until the explanation is given."

Abbé d'Aigrigny, his forehead resting on his hand, remained as if a stranger to this scene; he was too much occupied with his fears at the consequences of the approaching interview between Mdlle. de Cardoville and Marshal Simon's daughters—for there seemed no possibility of using force to prevent Adrienne from going out that evening.

Madame de Saint-Dizier went on: "The fact which so greatly scandalized the commissary is nothing compared to what I yet have to tell you, gentlemen. We had searched all parts of the pavilion without finding any one, and were just about to quit the bed-chamber, for we had taken this room the last, when Mrs. Grivois pointed out to us that one of the golden mouldings of a panel did not appear to come quite home to the wall. We drew the attention of the magistrate to this circumstance; his men examined, touched, felt—the panel flew open!—and then—can you guess what we discovered? But, no! it is too odious, too revolting; I dare not even——"

"Then I dare, madame," said Adrienne, resolutely, though she saw with the utmost grief the retreat of Agricola was discovered; "I will spare your highness's candor the recital of this new scandal, and yet what I am about to say is in nowise intended as a justification."

"It requires one, however," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a disdainful smile; "a man concealed by you in your own bedroom."

"A man concealed in her bedroom!" cried the Marquis d'Aigrigny, raising his head with apparent indignation, which only covered a cruel joy.

"A man! in the bedroom of Mademoiselle!" added Baron Tripeaud. "I hope this also was inserted in the report."

"Yes, yes, baron," said the princess with a triumphant air.

"But this man," said the doctor, in a hypocritical tone, "must have been a robber? Any other supposition would be in the highest degree improbable. This explains itself."

"Your indulgence deceives you, M. Baleinier," answered the princess, dryly.

"We know the sort of thieves," said Tripeaud; "they are generally young men, handsome, and very rich."

"You are wrong, sir," resumed Madame de Saint-Dizier. "Mademoiselle does not raise her views so high. She proves that a dereliction from duty may be ignoble as well as criminal. I am no longer astonished at the sympathy which was just now professed for the lower orders. It is the more touching and affecting, as the man concealed by her was dressed in a blouse."

"A blouse!" cried the baron, with an air of extreme disgust; "then he is one of the common people? It really makes one's hair stand on end."

"The man is a working smith—he confessed it," said the princess; "but not to be unjust—he is really a good-looking

fellow. It was doubtless that singular worship which Mademoiselle pays to the beautiful——"

"Enough, madame, enough!" said Adrienne suddenly, for, hitherto disdaining to answer, she had listened to her aunt with growing and painful indignation; "I was just now on the point of defending myself against one of your odious insinuations—but I will not a second time descend to any such weakness. One word only, madame; has this honest and worthy artisan been arrested?"

"To be sure, he has been arrested and taken to prison, under a strong escort. Does not that pierce your heart?" sneered the princess, with a triumphant air. "Your tender pity for this interesting smith must indeed be very great, since it deprives you of your sarcastic assurance."

"Yes, madame; for I have something better to do than to satirize that which is utterly odious and ridiculous," replied Adrienne, whose eyes grew dim with tears at the thought of the cruel hurt to Agricola's family. Then, putting her hat on, and tying the strings, she said to the doctor: "M. Baleinier, I asked you just now for your interest with the minister."

"Yes, madame; and it will give me great pleasure to act on your behalf."

"Is your carriage below?"

"Yes, madame," said the doctor, much surprised.

"You will be good enough to accompany me immediately to the minister's. Introduced by you, he will not refuse me the favor, or rather the act of justice, that I have to solicit."

"What, mademoiselle," said the princess; "do you dare take such a course, without my orders, after what has just passed? It is really quite unheard-of."

"It confounds one," added Tripeaud; "but we must not be surprised at anything."

The moment Adrienne asked the doctor if his carriage was below, D'Aigrigny started. A look of intense satisfaction flashed across his countenance, and he could hardly repress the violence of his delight, when, darting, a rapid and significant glance at the doctor, he saw the latter respond to it by twice closing his eyelids in token of comprehension and assent.

When therefore the princess resumed, in an angry tone, addressing herself to Adrienne: "Madame, I forbid you leaving the house!"—D'Aigrigny said to the speaker, with a peculiar inflection of the voice: "I think, your highness, we may trust the lady to the doctor's care."

The marquis pronounced these words in so significant a manner, that the princess, having looked by turns at the physician and D'Aigrigny, understood it all, and her countenance grew radiant with joy.

Not only did this pass with extreme rapidity, but the night was already almost come, so that Adrienne, absorbed in painful thoughts with regard to Agricola, did not perceive the different signals exchanged between the princess, the doctor, and the abbé. Even had she done so, they would have been incomprehensible to her.

Not wishing to have the appearance of yielding too readily to the suggestion of the marquis, Madame de Saint-Dizier resumed: "Though the doctor seems to me to be far too indulgent to mademoiselle, I might not see any great objection to trusting her with him; but that I do not wish to establish such a precedent, for henceforward she must have no will but mine."

"Madame," said the physician gravely, feigning to be somewhat shocked by the words of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, "I do not think I have been too indulgent to mademoiselle—but only just. I am at her orders, to take her to the minister if she wishes it. I do not know what she intends to solicit, but I believe her incapable of abusing the confidence I repose in her, or of making me support a recommendation undeserved."

Adrienne, much moved, extended her hand cordially to the doctor, and said to him: "Rest assured, my excellent friend, that you will thank me for the step I am taking, for you will assist in a noble action."

Tripeaud, who was not in the secret of the new plans of the doctor and the abbé, in a low voice faltered to the latter, with a stupefied air, "What! will you let her go?"

"Yes, yes," answered D'Aigrigny abruptly, making a sign that he should listen to the princess, who was about to speak. Advancing towards her niece, she said to her in a slow and measured tone, laying a peculiar emphasis on every word: "One moment more, mademoiselle—one last word in presence of these gentlemen. Answer me! Notwithstanding the heavy charges impending over you, are you still determined to resist my formal commands?"

"Yes, madame."

"Notwithstanding the scandalous exposure which has just taken place, you still persist in withdrawing yourself from my authority?"

"Yes, madame,"

"You refuse positively to submit to the regular and decent mode of life which I would impose upon you?"

"I have already told you, madame, that I am about to quit this dwelling in order to live alone and after my own fashion."

"Is that your final decision?"

"It is my last word."

"Reflect! the matter is serious. Beware!"

"I have given your highness my last word, and I never speak it twice."

"Gentlemen, you hear all this?" resumed the princess; "I have tried in vain all that was possible to conciliate. Mademoiselle will have only herself to thank for the measures to which this audacious revolt will oblige me to have recourse."

"Be it so, madame," replied Adrienne. Then, addressing M. Baleinier, she said quickly to him: "Come, my dear doctor; I am dying with impatience. Let us set out immediately. Every minute lost may occasion bitter tears to an honest family."

So saying, Adrienne left the room precipitately with the physician. One of the servants called for M. Baleinier's carriage. Assisted by the doctor, Adrienne mounted the step, without perceiving that he said something in a low whisper to the footman that opened the coach-door.

When, however, he was seated by the side of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and the door was closed upon them, he waited for about a second, and then called out in a loud voice to the coachman: "To the house of the minister, by the private entrance!" The horses started at a gallop.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A FALSE FRIEND.

Night had set in dark and cold. The sky, which had been clear till the sun went down, was now covered with gray and lurid clouds; a strong wind raised here and there, in circling eddies, the snow that was beginning to fall thick and fast.

The lamps threw a dubious light into the interior of Dr. Baleinier's carriage, in which he was seated alone with Adrienne de Cardoville. The charming countenance of the

latter, faintly illumined by the lamps beneath the shade of her little gray hat, looked doubly white and pure in contrast with the dark lining of the carriage, which was now filled with that sweet, delicious, and almost voluptuous perfume which hangs about the garments of young women of taste. The attitude of the girl, seated next to the doctor, was full of grace. Her slight and elegant figure, imprisoned in her high-necked dress of blue cloth, imprinted its wavy outline on the soft cushion against which she leaned; her little feet, crossed one upon the other, and stretched rather forward, rested upon a thick bear-skin, which carpeted the bottom of the carriage. In her hand, which was ungloved and dazzlingly white, she held a magnificently embroidered handkerchief, with which, to the great astonishment of M. Baleinier, she dried her eyes, now filled with tears.

Yes; Adrienne wept, for she now felt the reaction from the painful scenes through which she had passed at Saint-Dizier House; to the feverish and nervous excitement, which had till then sustained her, had succeeded a sorrowful dejection. Resolute in her independence, proud in her disdain, implacable in her irony, audacious in her resistance to unjust oppression, Adrienne was yet endowed with the most acute sensibility, which she always dissembled, however, in the presence of her aunt and those who surrounded her.

Notwithstanding her courage, no one could have been less masculine, less of a virago, than Mdlle de Cardoville. She was essentially womanly, but as a woman, she knew how to exercise great empire over herself, the moment that the least mark of weakness on her part would have rejoiced or emboldened her enemies.

The carriage had rolled onwards for some minutes; but Adrienne, drying her tears in silence, to the doctor's great astonishment, had not yet uttered a word.

"What, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne?" said M. Baleinier, truly surprised at her emotion; "what! you, that were just now so courageous, weeping?"

"Yes," answered Adrienne, in an agitated voice; "I weep in presence of a friend; but, before my aunt—oh! never."

"And yet, in that long interview, your stinging replies——"

"Ah me! do you think that I resigned myself with pleasure to that war of sarcasm? Nothing is more painful to me than such combats of bitter irony, to which I am forced by the necessity of defending myself from this woman and her friends. You speak of my courage: it does not consist,

I assure you, in the display of wicked feelings—but in the power to repress and hide all that I suffer, when I hear myself treated so grossly—in the presence, too, of people that I hate and despise—when, after all, I have never done them any harm, and have only asked to be allowed to live alone, freely and quietly, and see those about me happy."

"That's where it is: they envy your happiness, and that which you bestow upon others."

"And it is my aunt," cried Adrienne, with indignation, "my aunt, whose whole life has been one long scandal, that accuses me in this revolting manner!—as if she did not know me proud and honest enough never to make a choice of which I should be ashamed! Oh! if I ever love, I shall proclaim it, I shall be proud of it: for love, as I understand it, is the most glorious feeling in the world. But, alas!" continued Adrienne, with redoubled bitterness, "of what use are truth and honor, if they do not secure you from suspicions, which are as absurd as they are odious?" So saying, she again pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Come, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne," said M. Baleinier, in a voice full of the softest unction, "be calm—it is all over now. You have in me a devoted friend." As he pronounced these last words, he blushed in spite of his diabolical craft.

"I know you are my friend," said Adrienne: "I shall never forget that, by taking my part to-day, you exposed yourself to the resentment of my aunt—for I am not ignorant of her power, which is very great, alas! for evil."

"As for that," said the doctor, affecting a profound indifference, "we medical men are pretty safe from personal enmities."

"Nay, my dear M. Baleinier! Mme. de Saint-Dizier and her friends never forgive," said the young girl, with a shudder. "It needed all my invincible aversion, my innate horror for all that is base, cowardly, and perfidious, to induce me to break so openly with her. But if death itself were the penalty, I could not hesitate; and yet," she added, with one of those graceful smiles which gave such a charm to her beautiful countenance, "yet I am fond of life; if I have to reproach myself with anything, it is that I would have it too bright, too fair, too harmonious; but then, you know, I am resigned to my faults."

"Well, come, I am more tranquil," said the doctor, gayly; "for you smile—that is a good sign."

"It is often the wisest course; and yet, ought I smile,

after the threats that my aunt has held out to me? Still, what can she do? what is the meaning of this kind of family council? Did she seriously think that the advice of a M. d'Aigrigny or a M. Tripeaud could have influenced me? And then she talked of rigorous measures. What measures can she take; do you know?"

"I think, between ourselves, that the princess only wished to frighten you, and hopes to succeed by persuasion. She has the misfortune to fancy herself a mother of the Church, and dreams of your conversion," said the doctor, maliciously, for he now wished to tranquillize Adrienne at any cost; "but let us think no more about it. Your fine eyes must shine with all their lustre, to fascinate the minister that we are going to see."

"You are right, dear doctor; we ought always avoid grief, for it has the disadvantage of making us forget the sorrows of others. But here am I, availing myself of your kindness, without even telling you what I require."

"Luckily, we shall have plenty of time to talk over it, for our statesman lives at some distance."

"In two words, here's the mystery," answered Adrienne. "I told you what reasons I had to interest myself in that honest workman. This morning he came to me in great grief, to inform me that he was compromised by some songs he had written (for he is a poet), and that, though innocent, he was threatened with an arrest; and if they put him into prison, his family, whose sole support he is, would die of hunger. Therefore he came to beg me to procure bail for him, so that he might be left at liberty to work. I promised immediately, thinking of your interest with the minister; for, as they were already in pursuit of the poor lad, I chose to conceal him in my residence, and you know how my aunt has twisted that action. Now tell me, do you think, that, by means of your recommendation, the minister will grant me the freedom of this workman, bail being given for the same?"

"No doubt of it. There will not be the shadow of a difficulty—especially when you have explained the facts to him, with that eloquence of the heart which you possess in perfection."

"Do you know, my dear Dr. Baleinier, why I have taken the resolution (which is perhaps a strange one) to ask you to accompany me to the minister's?"

"Why, doubtless, to recommend your friend in a more effective manner."

"Yes—but also to put an end, by a decisive step, to the calumnies which my aunt will be sure to spread with regard to me, and which she has already, you know, had inserted in the report of the commissary of police. I have preferred to address myself at once, frankly and openly, to a man placed in a high social position. I will explain all to him, who will believe me, because truth has an accent of its own."

"All this, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne, is wisely planned. You will, as the saw says, kill two birds with one stone—or rather, you will obtain by one act of kindness two acts of justice; you will destroy a dangerous calumny, and restore a worthy youth to liberty."

"Come," said Adrienne, laughing, "thanks to this pleasing prospect, my light heart has returned."

"How true that in life," said the doctor, philosophically, "everything depends on the point of view."

Adrienne was so completely ignorant of the forms of a constitutional government, and had so blind a confidence in the doctor, that she did not doubt for an instant what he told her. She therefore resumed with joy: "What happiness it will be! when I go to fetch the daughters of Marshal Simon, to be able to console this workman's mother, who is now perhaps in a state of cruel anxiety, at not seeing her son return home!"

"Yes, you will have this pleasure," said M. Baleinier, with a smile; "for we will solicit and intrigue to such purpose, that the good mother may learn from you the release of her son before she even knows that he has been arrested."

"How kind, how obliging you are!" said Adrienne. "Really, if the motive were not so serious, I should be ashamed of making you lose so much precious time, my dear M. Baleinier. But I know your heart."

"I have no other wish, than to prove to you my profound devotion, my sincere attachment," said the doctor inhaling a pinch of snuff. But at the same time, he cast an uneasy glance through the window, for the carriage was just crossing the Place de l'Odéon, and in spite of the snow, he could see the front of the Odéon theatre brilliantly illuminated. Now Adrienne, who had just turned her head towards that side, might perhaps be astonished at the singular road they were taking.

In order to draw off her attention by a skilful diversion, the doctor exclaimed suddenly: "Bless me! I had almost forgotten."

"What is the matter, M. Baleinier?" said Adrienne, turning hastily towards him.

"I had forgotten a thing of the highest importance, in regard to the success of our petition."

"What is it, please?" asked the young girl, anxiously.

M. Baleinier gave a cunning smile. "Every man," said he, "has his weakness—ministers even more than others. The one we are going to visit has the folly to attach the utmost importance to his title, and the first impression would be unfavorable, if you did not lay great stress on the *Minister*."

"Is that all, my dear M. Baleinier?" said Adrienne, smiling in her turn. "I will even go so far as Your Excellency, which is, I believe, one of his adopted titles."

"Not now—but that is no matter; if you could even slide in a My Lord or two, our business would be done at once."

"Be satisfied! since there are upstart ministers as well as City-turned gentlemen, I will remember Molière's M. Jourdain, and feed full the gluttonous vanity of your friend."

"I give him up to you, for I know he will be in good hands," replied the physician, who rejoiced to see that the carriage had now entered those dark streets which lead from the Place de l'Odéon to the Pantheon district; "I do not wish to find fault with the minister for being proud, since his pride may be of service to us on this occasion."

"These petty devices are innocent enough," said Mdlle. de Cardoville, "and I confess that I do not scruple to have recourse to them." Then, leaning towards the door-sash, she added: "Gracious! how sad and dark are these streets. What wind! what snow! In which quarter are we?"

"What! are you so ungrateful, that you do not recognize by the absence of shops, your dear quarter of the Faubourg Saint Germain?"

"I imagined we had quitted it long ago."

"I thought so too," said the physician, leaning forward as if to ascertain where they were, "but we are still there. My poor coachman, blinded by the snow, which is beating against his face, must have gone wrong just now—but we are all right again. Yes, I perceive we are in the Rue Saint Guillaume—not the gayest of streets by the way—but, in ten minutes, we shall arrive at the minister's private entrance, for intimate friends like myself enjoy the privilege of escaping the honors of a grand reception."

Mdlle. de Cardoville, like most carriage-people, was so little acquainted with certain streets of Paris, as well as with

the customs of men in office, that she did not doubt for a moment the statements of Baleinier, in whom she reposed the utmost confidence.

When they left the Saint-Dizier House, the doctor had upon his lips a question which he hesitated to put, for fear of endangering himself in the eyes of Adrienne. The latter had spoken of important interests, the existence of which had been concealed from her. The doctor, who was an acute and skilful observer, had quite clearly remarked the embarrassment and anxiety of the princess and D'Aigrigny. He no longer doubted, that the plot directed against Adrienne—one in which he was the blind agent, in submission to the will of the Order—related to interests which had been concealed from him, and which, for that very reason, he burned to discover; for every member of the dark conspiracy to which he belonged had necessarily acquired the odious vices inherent to spies and informers—envy, suspicion, and jealous curiosity.

It is easy to understand, therefore, that Dr. Baleinier, though quite determined to serve the projects of D'Aigrigny, was yet very anxious to learn what had been kept from him. Conquering his irresolution, and finding the opportunity favorable, and no time to be lost, he said to Adrienne, after a moment's silence: "I am going perhaps to ask you a very indiscreet question. If you think it such, pray do not answer."

"Nay—go on, I entreat you."

"Just now—a few minutes before the arrival of the commissary of police was announced to your aunt—you spoke, I think, of some great interests, which had hitherto been concealed from you."

"Yes, I did so."

"These words," continued M. Baleinier, speaking slowly and emphatically, "appeared to make a deep impression on the princess."

"An impression so deep," said Adrienne, "that sundry suspicions of mine were changed to certainty."

"I need not tell you, my charming friend," resumed M. Baleinier, in a bland tone, "that if I remind you of this circumstance, it is only to offer you my services, in case they should be required. If not—and there is the shadow of impropriety in letting me know more—forget that I have said a word."

Adrienne became serious and pensive, and, after a silence of some moments, she thus answered Dr. Baleinier: "On

this subject, there are some things that I do not know—others that I may tell you—others again that I must keep from you: but you are so kind to-day, that I am happy to be able to give you a new mark of confidence."

"Then I wish to know nothing," said the doctor, with an air of humble deprecation, "for I should have the appearance of accepting a kind of reward; whilst I am paid a thousand times over, by the pleasure I feel in serving you."

"Listen," said Adrienne, without attending to the delicate scruples of Dr. Baleinier; "I have powerful reasons for believing that an immense inheritance must, at no very distant period, be divided between the members of my family, all of whom I do not know—for, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, those from whom we are descended were dispersed in foreign countries, and experienced a great variety of fortunes."

"Really!" cried the doctor, becoming extremely interested. "Where is this inheritance, in whose hands?"

"I do not know."

"Now how will you assert your rights?"

"That I shall learn soon."

"Who will inform you of it?"

"That I may not tell you."

"But how did you find out the existence of this inheritance?"

"That also I may not tell you," returned Adrienne, in a soft and melancholy tone, which remarkably contrasted with the habitual vivacity of her conversation. "It is a secret—a strange secret—and in those moments of excitement, in which you have sometimes surprised me, I have been thinking of extraordinary circumstances connected with this secret, which awakened within me lofty and magnificent ideas."

Adrienne paused and was silent, absorbed in her own reflections. Baleinier did not seek to disturb her. In the first place, Mdlle. de Cardoville did not perceive the direction the coach was taking; secondly, the doctor was not sorry to ponder over what he had just heard. With his usual perspicuity, he saw that the Abbé d'Aigrigny was concerned in this inheritance, and he resolved instantly to make a secret report on the subject; either M. d'Aigrigny was acting under the instructions of the Order, or by his own impulse; in the one event, the report of the doctor would confirm a fact; in the other, it would reveal one.

For some time, therefore, the lady and Dr. Baleinier remained perfectly silent, no longer even disturbed by the noise of the wheels, for the carriage now rolled over a thick carpet of snow, and the streets had become more and more deserted. Notwithstanding his crafty treachery, notwithstanding his audacity and the blindness of his dupe, the doctor was not quite tranquil as to the result of his machinations. The critical moment approached, and the least suspicion roused in the mind of Adrienne by any inadvertence on his part, might ruin all his projects.

Adrienne, already fatigued by the painful emotions of the day, shuddered from time to time, as the cold became more and more piercing; in her haste to accompany Dr. Baleinier, she had neglected to take either shawl or mantle.

For some minutes the coach had followed the line of a very high wall, which, seen through the snow, looked white against a black sky. The silence was deep and mournful. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and the footman went to knock at a large gateway; he first gave two rapid knocks, and then one other at a long interval. Adrienne did not notice the circumstance, for the noise was not loud, and the doctor had immediately begun to speak, to drown with his voice this species of signal.

"Here we are at last," said he gayly to Adrienne; "you must be very winning—that is, you must be yourself."

"Be sure I will do my best," replied Adrienne, with a smile; then she added, shivering in spite of herself: "How dreadfully cold it is! I must confess, my dear Dr. Baleinier, that when I have been to fetch my poor little relations from the house of our workman's mother, I shall be truly glad to find myself once more in the warmth and light of my own cheerful rooms, for you know my aversion to cold and darkness."

"It is quite natural," said the doctor, gallantly; "the most charming flowers require the most light and heat."

Whilst the doctor and Mdlle. de Cardoville exchanged these few words, a heavy gate had turned creaking upon its hinges, and the carriage had entered a court-yard. The physician got down first, to offer his arm to Adrienne.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE MINISTER'S CABINET.

The carriage had stopped before some steps covered with snow, which led to a vestibule lighted by a lamp. The better to ascend the steps, which were somewhat slippery, Adrienne leaned upon the doctor's arm.

"Dear me! how you tremble," said he.

"Yes," replied she, shuddering, "I feel deadly cold. In my haste, I came out without a shawl. But how gloomy this house appears," she added, pointing to the entrance.

"It is what you call the minister's private house, the sanctum sanctorum, whither our statesman retires far from the sound of the profane," said Dr. Baleinier, with a smile. "Pray come in!" and he pushed open the door of a large hall, completely empty.

"They are right in saying," resumed Dr. Baleinier, who covered his secret agitation with an appearance of gayety, "that a minister's house is like nobody else's. Not a footman—not a page, I should say—to be found in the antechamber. Luckily," added he, opening the door of a room which communicated with the vestibule,

"'In this seraglio reared, I know the secret ways.'"

Mdlle, de Cardoville was now introduced into an apartment hung with green embossed paper, and very simply furnished with mahogany chairs, covered with yellow velvet; the floor was carefully polished, and a globe lamp, which gave at most a third of its proper light, was suspended (at a much greater height than usual) from the ceiling. Finding the appearance of this habitation singularly plain for the dwelling of a minister, Adrienne, though she had no suspicion, could not suppress a movement of surprise and paused a moment on the threshold of the door. M. Baleinier, by whose arm she held, guessed the cause of her astonishment, and said to her with a smile:

"This place appears to you very paltry for 'his excellency,' does it not? If you knew what a thing constitutional economy is!—Moreover, you will see a 'my lord,' who has almost as little pretension as his furniture. But

please to wait for me an instant. I will go and inform the minister you are here, and return immediately."

Gently disengaging himself from the grasp of Adrienne, who had involuntarily pressed close to him, the physician opened a small side-door, by which he instantly disappeared. Adrienne de Cardoville was left alone.

Though she could not have explained the cause of her impression, there was something awe-inspiring to the young lady in this large, cold, naked, curtainless room; and as, by degrees, she noticed certain peculiarities in the furniture, which she had not at first perceived, she was seized with an indefinable feeling of uneasiness.

Approaching the cheerless hearth, she perceived with surprise that an iron grating completely enclosed the opening of the chimney, and that the tongs and shovel were fastened with iron chains. Already astonished by this singularity, she was about mechanically to draw towards her an arm-chair placed against the wall, when she found that it remained motionless. She then discovered that the back of this piece of furniture, as well as that of all the other chairs, was fastened to the wainscoting by iron clamps. Unable to repress a smile, she exclaimed: "Have they so little confidence in the statesman in whose house I am, that they are obliged to fasten the furniture to the walls?"

Adrienne had recourse to this somewhat forced pleasantry as a kind of effort to resist the painful feeling of apprehension that was gradually creeping over her; for the most profound and mournful silence reigned in this habitation, where nothing indicated the life, the movement and the activity, which usually surround a great centre of business. Only, from time to time, the young lady heard the violent gusts of wind from without.

More than a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and M. Baleinier did not return. In her impatient anxiety, Adrienne wished to call some one to inquire about the doctor and the minister. She raised her eyes to look for a bell-rope by the side of the chimney-glass; she found none, but she perceived, that what she had hitherto taken for a glass, thanks to the half obscurity of the room, was in reality a large sheet of shining tin. Drawing nearer to it, she accidentally touched a bronzed candlestick; and this, as well as a clock, was fixed to the marble of the chimney-piece.

In certain dispositions of mind, the most insignificant circumstances often assume terrific proportions. This immovable candlestick, this furniture fastened to the wains-

cot, this glass replaced by a tin sheet, this profound silence, and the prolonged absence of M. Baleinier, had such an effect upon Adrienne, that she was struck with a vague terror. Yet such was her implicit confidence in the doctor, that she reproached herself with her own fears, persuading herself that the causes of them were after all of no real importance, and that it was unreasonable to feel uneasy at such trifles.

Still, though she thus strove to regain courage, her anxiety induced her to do what otherwise she would never have attempted. She approached the little door by which the doctor had disappeared, and applied her ear to it. She held her breath, and listened, but heard nothing.

Suddenly, a dull, heavy sound, like that of a falling body, was audible just above her head; she thought she could even distinguish a stifled moaning. Raising her eyes, hastily, she saw some particles of the plaster fall from the ceiling, loosened, no doubt, by the shaking of the floor above.

No longer able to resist the feeling of terror, Adrienne ran to the door by which she had entered with the doctor, in order to call some one. To her great surprise, she found it was fastened on the outside. Yet, since her arrival, she had heard no sound of a key turning in the lock.

More and more alarmed, the young girl flew to the little door by which the physician had disappeared, and at which she had just been listening. This door also was fastened on the outside.

Still, wishing to struggle with the terror which was gaining invincibly upon her, Adrienne called to her aid all the firmness of her character, and tried to argue away her fears.

"I must have been deceived," she said; "it was only a fall that I heard. The moaning had no existence, except in my imagination. There are a thousand reasons for believing that it was not a person who fell down. But, then, these locked doors? They, perhaps, do not know that I am here; they may have thought that there was nobody in this room."

As she uttered these words, Adrienne looked round with anxiety; then she added, in a firm voice: "No weakness! it is useless to try to blind myself to my real situation. On the contrary, I must look it well in the face. It is evident that I am not here at a minister's house; no end of reasons prove it beyond a doubt; M. Baleinier has therefore deceived me. But for what end? Why has he brought me hither? Where am I?"

The last two questions appeared to Adrienne both equally insoluble. It only remained clear, that she was the victim of M. Baleinier's perfidy. But this certainly seemed so horrible to the young girl's truthful and generous soul, that she still tried to combat the idea by the recollection of the confiding friendship which she had always shown this man. She said to herself with bitterness: "See how weakness and fear may lead one to unjust and odious suspicions! Yes; for until the last extremity, it is not justifiable to believe in so infernal a deception—and then only upon the clearest evidence. I will call some one; it is the only way of completely satisfying these doubts." Then, remembering that there was no bell, she added: "No matter; I will knock, and some one will doubtless answer." With her little, delicate hand, Adrienne struck the door several times.

The dull, heavy sound which came from the door showed that it was very thick. No answer was returned to the young girl. She ran to the other door. There was the same appeal on her part, the same profound silence without—only interrupted from time to time by the howling of the wind.

"I am not more timid than other people," said Adrienne, shuddering; "I do not know if it is the excessive cold, but I tremble in spite of myself. I endeavor to guard against all weakness; yet I think that any one in my position would find all this very strange and frightful."

At this instant, loud cries, or rather savage and dreadful howlings, burst furiously from the room just above, and soon after a sort of stamping of feet, like the noise of a violent struggle, shook the ceiling of the apartment. Struck with consternation, Adrienne uttered a loud cry of terror became deadly pale, stood for a moment motionless with affright, and then rushed to one of the windows, and abruptly threw it open.

A violent gust of wind, mixed with melted snow, beat against Adrienne's face, swept roughly into the room, and soon extinguished the flickering and smoky light of the lamp. Thus, plunged in profound darkness, with her hands clinging to the bars that were placed across the window, Mdlle. de Cardoville yielded at length to the full influence of her fears, so long restrained, and was about to call aloud for help, when an unexpected apparition rendered her for some minutes absolutely mute with terror.

Another wing of the building, opposite to that in which she was, stood at no great distance. Through the midst of

the black darkness, which filled the space between, one large, lighted window was distinctly visible. Through the curtainless panes, Adrienne perceived a white figure, gaunt and ghastly, dragging after it a sort of shroud, and passing and repassing continually before the window, with an abrupt and restless motion. Her eyes fixed upon this window, shining through the darkness, Adrienne remained as if fascinated by that fatal vision: and, as the spectacle filled up the measure of her fears, she called for help with all her might, without quitting the bars of the window to which she clung. After a few seconds, whilst she was thus crying out, two tall women entered the room in silence, unperceived by Mdlle. de Cardoville, who was still clinging to the window.

These women, of about forty to fifty years of age, robust and masculine, were negligently and shabbily dressed, like chambermaids of the lower sort; over their clothes they wore large aprons of blue cotton, cut sloping from their necks, and reaching down to their feet. One of them, who held a lamp in her hand, had a broad, red, shining face, a large pimpled nose, small green eyes, and tow hair, which straggled rough and shaggy from beneath her dirty white cap. The other, sallow, withered, and bony, wore a mourning-cap over a parchment visage, pitted with the small-pox, and rendered still more repulsive by the thick black eyebrows, and some long gray hairs that overshadowed the upper lip. This woman carried, half unfolded in her hand, a garment of strange form, made of thick gray stuff.

They both entered silently by the little door, at the moment when Adrienne, in the excess of her terror, was grasping the bars of the window, and crying out: "Help! help!"

Pointing out the young lady to each other, one of them went to place the lamp on the chimney-piece, whilst the other (she who wore the mourning-cap) approached the window, and laid her great bony hand upon Mdlle. de Cardoville's shoulder.

Turning round, Adrienne uttered a new cry of terror at the sight of this grim figure. Then, the first moment of stupor over, she began to feel less afraid; hideous as was this woman, it was at least some one to speak to; she exclaimed, therefore, in an agitated voice: "Where is M. Baleinier?"

The two women looked at each other, exchanged a leer of mutual intelligence, but did not answer.

"I ask you, madame," resumed Adrienne, "where is

M. Baleinier, who brought me hither? I wish to see him instantly."

"He is gone," said the big woman.

"Gone!" cried Adrienne; "gone without me!—Gracious heaven! what can be the meaning of all this?" Then, after a moment's reflection, she resumed, "Please to fetch me a coach."

The two women looked at each other, and shrugged their shoulders. "I entreat you, madame," continued Adrienne, with forced calmness in her voice, "to fetch me a coach—since M. Baleinier is gone without me. I wish to leave this place."

"Come, come, madame," said the tall woman, who was called "Tomboy," without appearing to listen to what Adrienne asked, "it is time for you to go to bed."

"To go to bed!" cried Mdlle. Cardoville, in alarm. "This is really enough to drive one mad." Then, addressing the two women, she added: "What is this house? where am I? answer!"

"You are in a house," said Tomboy, in a rough voice, "where you must not make a row from the window, as you did just now."

"And where you must not put out the lamp as you have done," added the other woman, who was called Gervaise, "or else we shall have a crow to pick with you."

Adrienne, unable to utter a word, and trembling with fear, looked in a kind of stupor from one to the other of these horrible women; her reason strove in vain to comprehend what was passing around her. Suddenly she thought she had guessed it, and exclaimed: "I see there is a mistake here. I do not understand how, but there is a mistake. You take me for some one else. Do you know who I am? My name is Adrienne de Cardoville! You see, therefore, that I am at liberty to leave this house; no one in the world has the right to detain me. I command you, then, to fetch me a coach immediately. If there are none in this quarter, let me have some one to accompany me home to the Rue de Babylone, Saint-Dizier House. I will reward such a person liberally, and you also."

"Well, have you finished?" said Tomboy. "What is the use of telling us all this rubbish?"

"Take care," resumed Adrienne, who wished to try every means; "if you detain me here by force, it will be very serious. You do not know to what you expose yourselves."

"Will you come to bed; yes or no?" said Gervaise, in a tone of harsh impatience.

"Listen to me, madame," resumed Adrienne, precipitately, "let me out this place, and I will give each of you two thousand francs. Is it not enough? I will give you ten—twenty—whatever you ask. I am rich—only let me out—for heaven's sake, let me out!—I cannot remain here—I am afraid." As she said this, the tone of the poor girl's voice was heartrending.

"Twenty thousand francs!—that's the usual figure, ain't it, Tomboy?"

"Let be, Gervaise! they all sing the same song."

"Well, then? since reasons, prayers, and menaces are all in vain," said Adrienne gathering energy from her desperate position, "I declare to you that I will go out and that instantly. We will see if you are bold enough to employ force against me."

So saying, Adrienne advanced resolutely towards the door. But, at this moment, the wild, hoarse cries, which had preceded the noise of the struggle that had so frightened her, again resounded; only, this time they were not accompanied by the movement of feet.

"Oh! what screams!" said Adrienne, stopping short, and in her terror drawing nigh to the two women. "Do you not hear those cries? What, then, is this house, in which one hears such things? And over there, too," added she almost beside herself, as she pointed to the other wing, where the lighted windows shone through the darkness, and the white figure continued to pass and repass before it; "over there! do you see? What is it?"

"Oh! that 'un," said Tomboy; "one of the folks who, like you, have not behaved well."

"What do you say?" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, clasping her hands in terror. "Heavens! what is this house? What do they do to them?"

"What will be done to you, if you are naughty, and refuse to come to bed," answered Gervaise.

"They put this on them," said Tomboy, showing the garment that she had held under her arm, "they clap 'em into the strait-waistcoat."

"Oh!" cried Adrienne, hiding her hands in her face with horror. A terrible discovery had flashed suddenly upon her. She understood it all.

Capping the violent emotions of the day, the effect of this last blow was dreadful. The young girl felt her strength give way. Her hands fell powerless, her face became fearfully pale, all her limbs trembled, and sinking upon her knees,

and casting a terrified glance at the strait-waistcoat, she was just able to falter in a feeble voice, "Oh, no: not that—for pity's sake, madame. I will do—whatever you wish." And, her strength quite failing, she would have fallen upon the ground if the two women had not run towards her, and received her fainting into their arms.

"A fainting fit," said Tomboy; "that's not dangerous. Let us carry her to bed. We can undress her, and this will be all nothing."

"Carry her, then," said Gervaise. "I will take the lamp."

"The tall and robust Tomboy took up Mdlle. de Cardoville as if she had been a sleeping child, carried her in her arms, and followed her companion into the chamber through which M. Baleinier had made his exit.

This chamber, though perfectly clean, was cold and bare. A greenish paper covered the walls, and a low, little iron bedstead, the head of which formed a kind of shelf, stood in one corner; a stove, fixed in the chimney-place, was surrounded by an iron grating, which forbade a near approach; a table fastened to the wall, a chair placed before this table, and also clamped to the floor, a mahogany chest of drawers, and a rush-bottomed arm-chair completed the scanty furniture. The curtainless window was furnished on the inside with an iron grating, which served to protect the panes from being broken.

It was into this gloomy retreat, which formed so painful a contrast with the charming little summer-house in the Rue de Babylone, that Adrienne was carried by Tomboy, who, with the assistance of Gervaise, placed the inanimate form on the bed. The lamp was deposited on the shelf at the head of the couch. Whilst one of the nurses held her up, the other unfastened and took off the cloth dress of the young girl, whose head drooped languidly on her bosom. Though in a swoon, large tears trickled slowly from her closed eyes, whose long black lashes threw their shadows on the transparent whiteness of her cheeks. Over her neck and breast of ivory flowed the golden waves of her magnificent hair, which had come down at the time of her fall. When, as they unlaced her satin corset, less soft, less fresh, less white than the virgin form beneath, which lay like a statue of alabaster in its covering of lace and lawn, one of the horrible hags felt the arms and shoulders of the young girl with her large, red, horny, and chapped hands. Though she did not completely recover the use of her senses, she started involuntarily from the rude and brutal touch.

"Hasn't she little feet?" said the nurse, who, kneeling down, was employed in drawing off Adrienne's stockings. "I could hold them both in the hollow of my hand." In fact, a small, rosy foot, smooth as a child's, here and there veined with azure, was soon exposed to view, as was also a leg with pink knee and ankle, of as pure and exquisite a form as that of Diana Huntress.

"And what hair!" said Tomboy; "so long and soft!—She might almost walk upon it. 'Twould be a pity to cut it off, to put ice upon her skull!" As she spoke, she gathered up Adrienne's magnificent hair, and twisted it as well as she could behind her head. Alas! it was no longer the fair, light hand of Georgette, Florine, or Hebe that arranged the beauteous locks of their mistress with so much love and pride!

And as she again felt the rude touch of the nurse's hand, the young girl was once more seized with the same nervous trembling, only more frequently and strongly than before. And soon, whether by a sort of instinctive repulsion, magnetically excited during her swoon, or from the effect of the cold night air, Adrienne again started and slowly came to herself.

It is impossible to describe her alarm, horror, and chaste indignation, as, thrusting aside with both her hands the numerous curls that covered her face, bathed in tears, she saw herself half-naked between these filthy hags. At first, she uttered a cry of shame and terror; then to escape from the looks of the women, by a movement, rapid as thought, she threw down the lamp placed on the shelf at the head of her bed, so that it was extinguished and broken to pieces on the floor. After which, in the midst of the darkness, the unfortunate girl, covering herself with the bed-clothes, burst into passionate sobs.

The nurses attributed Adrienne's cry and violent actions to a fit of furious madness. "Oh! you begin again to break the lamps—that's your partickler fancy, is it?" cried Tomboy, angrily, as she felt her way in the dark. "Well! I gave you fair warning. You shall have the strait-waistcoat on this very night, like the mad gal upstairs."

"That's it," said the other; "hold her fast, Tommy, while I go and fetch a light. Between us, we'll soon master her."

"Make haste, for, in spite of her soft look, she must be a regular fury. We shall have to sit up all night with her, I suppose."

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Sad and painful contrast! That morning, Adrienne had risen free, smiling, happy, in the midst of all the wonders of luxury and art, and surrounded by the delicate attentions of the three charming girls whom she had chosen to serve her. In her generous and fantastic mood, she had prepared a magnificent and fairy-like surprise for the young Indian prince, her relation; she had also taken a noble resolution with regard to the two orphans brought home by Dagobert; in her interview with Mme. de Saint-Dizier, she had shown herself by turns proud and sensitive, melancholy and gay, ironical and serious, loyal and courageous; finally, she had come to this accursed house to plead in favor of an honest and laborious artisan.

And now, in the evening—delivered over by an atrocious piece of treachery to the ignoble hands of two coarse-minded nurses in a madhouse—Mdlle. de Cardoville felt her delicate limbs imprisoned in that abominable garment, which is called a strait-waistcoat.

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Mdlle. de Cardoville passed a horrible night in company with the two hags. The next morning, at nine o'clock, what was the young lady's stupor to see Dr. Baleinier enter the room, still smiling with an air at once benevolent and paternal.

"Well, my dear child?" said he, in a bland, affectionate voice; "how have we spent the night?"

CHAPTER XLV.

THE VISIT.

The keepers, yielding to Mdlle. de Cardoville's prayers, and, above all, to her promises of good behavior, had only left on the canvas jacket a portion of the time. Towards morning, they had allowed her to rise and dress herself, without interfering.

Adrienne was seated on the edge of her bed. The alteration in her features, her dreadful paleness, the lurid fire of fever shining in her eyes, the convulsive trembling which ever and anon shook her frame, showed already the fatal effects of this terrible night upon a susceptible and high-strung organization. At sight of Dr. Baleinier, who, with a

sign, made Gervaise and her mate leave the room, Adrienne remained petrified.

She felt a kind of giddiness at the thought of the audacity of the man, who dared to present himself to her! But when the physician repeated, in the softest tone of affectionate interest: "Well, my poor child! how have we spent the night?" she pressed her hands to her burning forehead, as if in doubt whether she was awake or sleeping. Then, staring at the doctor, she half opened her lips; but they trembled so much that it was impossible for her to utter a word. Anger, indignation, contempt, and, above all, the bitter and acutely painful feeling of a generous heart, whose confidence has been basely betrayed, so overpowered Adrienne that she was unable to break the silence.

"Come, come! I see how it is," said the doctor, shaking his head sorrowfully; "you are very much displeased with me—is it not so? Well! I expected it, my dear child."

These words, pronounced with the most hypocritical effrontery, made Adrienne start up. Her pale cheek flushed, her large eyes sparkled, she lifted proudly her beautiful head, whilst her upper lip curled slightly with a smile of disdainful bitterness; then, passing in angry silence before M. Baleinier, who retained his seat, she directed her swift and firm steps towards the door. This door, in which was a little wicket, was fastened on the outside. Adrienne turned towards the doctor, and said to him, with an imperious gesture: "Open that door for me!"

"Come, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne," said the physician, "be calm. Let us talk like good friends—for you know I am your friend." And he inhaled slowly a pinch of snuff.

"It appears, sir," said Adrienne, in a voice trembling with indignation, "I am not to leave this place to-day?"

"Alas! no. In such a state of excitement—if you knew how inflamed your face is, and your eyes so feverish, your pulse must be at least eighty to the minute—I conjure you, my dear child, not to aggravate your symptoms by this fatal agitation."

After looking fixedly at the doctor, Adrienne returned with a slow step, and again took her seat on the edge of the bed. "That is right," resumed M. Baleinier: "only be reasonable; and, as I said before, let us talk together like good friends."

"You say well, sir," replied Adrienne, in a collected and perfectly calm voice; "let us talk like friends. You wish to make me pass for mad—is it not so?"

"I wish, my dear child, that one day you may feel towards me as much gratitude as you now do aversion. The latter I had fully foreseen—but, however painful may be the performance of certain duties, we must resign ourselves to it."

M. Baleinier sighed, as he said this, with such a natural air of conviction, that for a moment Adrienne could not repress a movement of surprise; then, while her lip curled with a bitter laugh, she answered: "Oh, it's very clear, you have done all this for my good?"

"Really, my dear young lady—have I ever had any other design than to be useful to you?"

"I do not know, sir, if your impudence be not still more odious than your cowardly treachery!"

"Treachery!" said M. Baleinier, shrugging his shoulders with a grieved air; "treachery, indeed! Only reflect, my poor child—do you think, if I were not acting with good faith, conscientiously, in your interest, I should return this morning to meet your indignation, for which I was fully prepared? I am the head physician of this asylum, which belongs to me—but I have two of my pupils here, doctors, like myself—and might have left them to take care of you—but, no—I could not consent to it—I knew your character, your nature, your previous history, and (leaving out of the question the interest I feel for you) I can treat your case better than any one."

Adrienne had heard M. Baleinier without interrupting him; she now looked at him fixedly, and said: "Pray, sir, how much do they pay you to make me pass for mad?"

"Madame!" cried M. Baleinier, who felt stung in spite of himself.

"You know I am rich," continued Adrienne, with overwhelming disdain; "I will double the sum that they give you. Come, sir—in the name of friendship, as you call it—let me have the pleasure of outbidding them."

"Your keepers," said M. Baleinier, recovering all his coolness, "have informed me, in their report of the night's proceedings, that you made similar propositions to them."

"Pardon me, sir; I offered them what might be acceptable to poor women, without education, whom misfortune has forced to undertake a painful employment—but to you, sir—a man of the world, a man of science, a man of great abilities—that is quite different—the pay must be a great deal higher. There is treachery at all prices; so do not found your refusal on the smallness of my offer to those wretched women. Tell me—how much do you want?"

"Your keepers, in their report of the night, have also spoken of threats," resumed M. Baleinier, with the same coolness; "have you any of those likewise to address me? Believe me, my poor child, you will do well to exhaust at once your attempts at corruption, and your vain threats of vengeance. We shall then come to the true state of the case."

"So you deem my threats vain!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, at length giving way to the full tide of her indignation, till then restrained. "Do you think, sir, that when I leave this place—for this outrage must have an end—that I will not proclaim aloud your infamous treachery? Do you think that I will not denounce to the contempt and horror of all, your base conspiracy with Madame de Saint-Dizier? Oh! do you think that I will conceal the frightful treatment I have received! But, mad as I may be, I know that there are laws in this country, by which I will demand a full reparation for myself, and shame, disgrace, and punishment, for you, and for those who have employed you! Henceforth, between you and me will be hate and war to the death; and all my strength, all my intelligence——"

"Permit me to interrupt you, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne," said the doctor, still perfectly calm and affectionate; "nothing can be more unfavorable to your cure, than to cherish idle hopes: they will only tend to keep up a state of deplorable excitement: it is best to put the facts fairly before you, that you may understand clearly your position.

1. It is impossible for you to leave this house. 2. You can have no communication with any one beyond its walls. 3. No one enters here that I cannot perfectly depend upon. 4. I am completely indifferent to your threats of vengeance, because law and reason are both in my favor."

"What! have you the right to shut me up here?"

"We should never have come to that determination, without a number of reasons of the most serious kind."

"Oh! there are reasons for it, it seems."

"Unfortunately, too many."

"You will perhaps inform me of them?"

"Alas! they are only too conclusive; and if you should ever apply to the protection of the laws, as you threatened me just now, we should be obliged to state them. The fantastical eccentricity of your manner of living, your whimsical mode of dressing up your maids, your extravagant expenditure, the story of the Indian prince, to whom you offered a royal hospitality, your unprecedented resolution of

going to live by yourself, like a young bachelor, the adventure of the man found concealed in your bed-chamber; finally, the report of your yesterday's conversation, which was faithfully taken down in shorthand, by a person employed for that purpose."

"Yesterday?" cried Adrienne, with as much indignation as surprise.

"Oh, yes! to be prepared for every event, in case you should misinterpret the interest we take in you, we had all your answers reported by a man who was concealed behind a curtain in the next room; and really, one day, in a calmer state of mind, when you come to read over quietly the particulars of what took place, you will no longer be astonished at the resolution we have been forced to adopt."

"Go on, sir," said Adrienne, with contempt.

"The facts I have cited being thus confirmed and acknowledged, you will understand, my dear Mdlle. Adrienne, that your friends are perfectly free from responsibility. It was their duty to endeavor to cure this derangement of mind, which at present only shows itself in idle whims, but which, were it to increase, might seriously compromise the happiness of your future life. Now, in my opinion, we may hope to see a radical cure, by means of a treatment at once physical and moral; but the first condition of this attempt was to remove you from the scenes which so dangerously excited your imagination; whilst a calm retreat, the repose of a simple and solitary life, combined with my anxious, I may say, paternal care, will gradually bring about a complete recovery——"

"So, sir," said Adrienne, with a bitter laugh "the love of a noble independence, generosity, the worship of the beautiful, detestation of what is base and odious, such are the maladies of which you wish to cure me; I fear that my case is desperate, for my aunt has long ago tried to effect that benevolent purpose."

"Well, we may perhaps not succeed; but at least we will attempt it. You see, then, there is a mass of serious facts, quite enough to justify the determination come to by the family-council, which puts me completely at my ease with regard to your menaces. It is to that I wish to return; a man of my age and condition never acts lightly in such circumstances, and you can readily understand what I was saying to you just now. In a word, do not hope to leave this place before your complete recovery, and rest assured, that I am and shall ever be safe from your resentment. This

being once admitted, let us talk of your actual state with all the interest that you naturally inspire."

"I think, sir, that, considering I am mad, you speak to me very reasonably."

"Mad! no, thank heaven, my poor child, you are not mad yet—and I hope that, by my care, you will never be so. It is to prevent your becoming mad, that one must take it in time; and believe me, it is full time. You look at me with such an air of surprise—now tell me, what interest can I have in talking to you thus? Is it the hatred of your aunt that I wish to favor? To what end, I would ask? What can she do for me or against me? I think of her at this moment neither more nor less than I thought yesterday. Is it a new language that I hold to yourself? Did I not speak to you yesterday many times, of the dangerous excitement of mind in which you were, and of your singular whims and fancies? It is true, I made use of stratagem to bring you hither. No doubt, I did so. I hastened to avail myself of the opportunity, which you yourself offered, my poor, dear child; for you would never have come hither with your own good will. One day or the other, we must have found some pretext to get you here; and I said to myself; 'Her interest before all! Do your duty, let whatever will betide!'——"

Whilst M. Baleinier was speaking, Adrienne's countenance, which had hitherto expressed alternately indignation and disdain, assumed an indefinable look of anguish and horror. On hearing this man talk in such a natural manner, and with such an appearance of sincerity, justice, and reason, she felt herself more alarmed than ever. An atrocious deception, clothed in such forms, frightened her a hundred times more than the avowed hatred of Madame de Saint-Dizier. This audacious hypocrisy seemed to her so monstrous, that she believed it almost impossible.

Adrienne had so little the art of hiding her emotions, that the doctor, a skilful and profound physiognomist, instantly perceived the impression he had produced. "Come," said he to himself, "that is a great step. Fright has succeeded to disdain and anger. Doubt will come next. I shall not leave this place, till she has said to me: 'Return soon, my good M. Baleinier!' With a voice of sorrowful emotion, which seemed to come from the very depths of his heart, the doctor thus continued: "I see, you are still suspicious of me. All I can say to you is falsehood, fraud, hypocrisy, hate—is it not so?—*Hate* you? why, in heaven's name, should I hate you? What have you done to

me? or rather—you will perhaps attach more value to this reason from a man of my sort," added M. Baleinier, bitterly, "or rather, what interest have I to hate you?—You, that have only been reduced to the state in which you are by an over-abundance of the most generous instincts—you, that are suffering, as it were, from an excess of good qualities—you can bring yourself coolly and deliberately to accuse an honest man, who has never given you any but marks of affection, of the basest, the blackest, the most abominable crime, of which a human being could be guilty. Yes, I call it a crime; because the audacious deception of which you accuse me would not deserve any other name. Really, my poor child, it is hard—very hard—and I now see, that an independent spirit may sometimes exhibit as much injustice and intolerance as the most narrow mind. It does not incense me—no—it only pains me: yes, I assure you—it pains me cruelly." And the doctor drew his hand across his moist eyes.

It is impossible to give the accent, the look, the gesture of M. Baleinier, as he thus expressed himself. The most able and practised lawyer, or the greatest actor in the world, could not have played this scene with more effect than the doctor—or rather, no one could have played it so well—for M. Baleinier, carried away by the influence of the situation, was himself half convinced of what he said.

In few words, he felt all the horror of his own perfidy; but he felt also that Adrienne could not believe it; for there are combinations of such nefarious character, that pure and upright minds are unable to comprehend them as possible. If a lofty spirit looks down into the abyss of evil, beyond a certain depth, it is seized with giddiness, and no longer able to distinguish one object from the other.

And then the most perverse of men have a day, an hour, a moment, in which the good instincts, planted in the heart of every creature, appear in spite of themselves. Adrienne was too interesting, was in too cruel a position, for the doctor not to feel some pity for her in his heart; the tone of sympathy, which for some time past he had been obliged to assume towards her, and the sweet confidence of the young girl in return, had become for this man habitual and necessary gratifications. But sympathy and habit were now to yield to implacable necessity.

Thus the Marquis d'Aigrigny had idolized his mother; dying, she called him to her—and he turned away from the last prayer of a parent in the agony of death. After such

an example, how could M. Baleinier hesitate to sacrifice Adrienne? The members of the Order, of which he formed a part, were bound to him—but he was perhaps still more strongly bound to them, for a long partnership in evil creates terrible and indissoluble ties.

The moment M. Baleinier finished his fervid address to Mdlle. de Cardoville, the slide of the wicket in the door was softly pushed back, and a pair of eyes peered attentively into the chamber, unperceived by the doctor.

Adrienne could not withdraw her gaze from the physician's, which seemed to fascinate her. Mute, overpowered, seized with a vague terror, unable to penetrate the dark depths of this man's soul, moved in spite of herself by the accent of sorrow, half feigned and half real—the young lady had a momentary feeling of doubt. For the first time, it came into her mind, that M. Baleinier might perhaps be committing a frightful error—committing it in good faith.

Besides, the anguish of the past night, the dangers of her position, her feverish agitation, all concurred to fill her mind with trouble and indecision. She looked at the physician with ever increasing surprise, and making a violent effort not to yield to a weakness, of which she partly foresaw the dreadful consequences, she exclaimed: "No, no, sir; I will not, I cannot believe it. You have too much skill, too much experience, to commit such an error."

"An error!" said M. Baleinier, in a grave and sorrowful tone. "Let me speak to you in the name of that skill and experience, which you are pleased to ascribe to me. Hear me but for a moment, my dear child; and then I will appeal to yourself."

"To me!" replied the young girl, in a kind of stupor; "you wish to persuade me, that——" Then, interrupting herself, she added, with a convulsive laugh: "This only is wanting to your triumph—to bring me to confess that I am mad—that my proper place is here—that I owe you——"

"Gratitude. Yes, you do owe it me, even as I told you at the commencement of this conversation. Listen to me then: my words may be cruel, but there are wounds which can only be cured with steel and fire. I conjure you, my dear child—reflect—throw back one impartial glance at your past life—weigh your own thoughts—and you will be afraid of yourself. Remember those moments of strange excitement, during which, as you have told me, you seemed to soar above the earth—and, above all, while it is yet time—while you preserve enough clearness of mind to compare and judge

—compare, I entreat, your manner of living with that of other ladies of your age? Is there a single one who acts as you act? who thinks as you think? unless, indeed, you imagine yourself so superior to other women, that, in virtue of that supremacy, you can justify a life and habits that have no parallel in the world."

"I have never had such stupid pride, you know it well," said Adrienne, looking at the doctor with growing terror.

"Then, my dear child, to what are we to attribute your strange and inexplicable mode of life? Can you even persuade yourself that it is founded on reason? Oh, my child! take care?—As yet, you only indulge in charming originalities of conduct, poetical eccentricities, sweet and vague reveries—but the tendency is fatal, the downward course irresistible. Take care, take care!—the healthful, graceful, spiritual portion of your intelligence has yet the upper hand, and imprints its stamp upon all your extravagances; but you do not know, believe me, with what frightful force the insane portion of the mind, at a given moment, develops itself and strangles up the rest. Then we have no longer graceful eccentricities, like yours; but ridiculous, sordid, hideous delusions."

"Oh! you frighten me," said the unfortunate girl, as she passed her trembling hands across her burning brow.

"Then," continued M. Baleinier, in an agitated voice, "then the last rays of intelligence are extinguished; then madness—for we must pronounce the dreaded word—gets the upper hand, and displays itself in furious and savage transports."

"Like the woman upstairs," murmured Adrienne, as, with fixed and eager look, she raised her finger towards the ceiling.

"Sometimes," continued the doctor, alarmed himself at the terrible consequences of his own words, but yielding to the inexorable fatality of his situation, "sometimes madness takes a stupid and brutal form; the unfortunate creature, who is attacked by it, preserves nothing human but the shape—has only the instincts of the lower animals—eats with voracity, and moves ever backwards and forwards in the cell, in which such a being is obliged to be confined. That is all its life—all."

"Like the woman yonder," cried Adrienne, with a still wilder look, as she slowly raised her arm towards the window that was visible on the other side of the building.

"Why—yes," said M. Baleinier. "Like you, unhappy

child, those women were young, fair, and sensible, but like you, alas! they had in them the fatal germ of insanity, which, not having been destroyed in time, grew, and grew, larger and ever larger, until it overspread and destroyed their reason."

"Oh, mercy!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, whose head was getting confused with terror; "mercy! do not tell me such things!—I am afraid. Take me from this place—oh! take me from this place!" she added, with a heart-rending accent; "for, if I remain here, I shall end by going mad! No," added she, struggling with the terrible agony which assailed her, "no, do not hope it! I shall not become mad. I have all my reason. I am not blind enough to believe what you tell me. Doubtless, I live differently from others; think differently from others; am shocked by things that do not offend others; but what does all this prove? Only that I am different from others. Have I a bad heart? Am I envious or selfish? My ideas are singular, I know—yes, I confess it—but then, M. Baleinier, is not their tendency good, generous, noble!—Oh!" cried Adrienne's supplicating voice, while her tears flowed abundantly, "I have never in my life done one malicious action; my worst errors have arisen from excess of generosity. Is it madness to wish to see everybody about one too happy? And again, if you are mad, you must feel it yourself—and I do not feel it—and yet—I scarcely know—you tell me such terrible things of those two women! You ought to know these things better than I. But then," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, with an accent of the deepest despair, "something ought to have been done. Why, if you felt an interest for me, did you wait so long? Why did you not take pity on me sooner? But the most frightful fact is, that I do not know whether I ought to believe you—for all this may be a snare—but no, no! you weep—it is true, then!—you weep!" She looked anxiously at M. Baleinier, who, notwithstanding his cynical philosophy, could not restrain his tears at the sight of these nameless tortures.

"You weep over me," she continued; "so it is true! But (good heaven!) must there not be something done? I will do all that you wish—all—so that I may not be like those women. But if it should be too late? no, it is not too late—say it is not too late, my good M. Baleinier! Oh, now I ask your pardon for what I said when you came in—but then I did not know, you see—I did not know!"

To these few broken words, interrupted by sobs, and rush-

ing forth in a sort of feverish excitement, succeeded a silence of some minutes, during which the deeply affected physician dried his tears. His resolution had almost failed him. Adrienne hid her face in her hands. Suddenly she again lifted her head; her countenance was calmer than before, though agitated by a nervous trembling.

"M. Baleinier," she resumed, with touching dignity, "I hardly know what I said to you just now. Terror, I think, made me wander; I have again collected myself. Hear me! I know that I am in your power; I know that nothing can deliver me from it. Are you an implacable enemy? or are you a friend? I am not able to determine. Do you really apprehend, as you assure me, that what is now eccentricity will hereafter become madness—or are you rather the accomplice in some infernal machination? You alone can answer. In spite of my boasted courage, I confess myself conquered. Whatever is required of me—you understand, whatever it may be, I will subscribe to, I give you my word and you know that I hold it sacred—you have therefore no longer any interest to keep me here. If, on the contrary, you really think my reason in danger—and I own that you have awakened in my mind vague, but frightful doubts—tell it me, and I will believe you. I am alone, at your mercy, without friends, without counsel. I trust myself blindly to you. I know not whether I address myself to a deliverer or a destroyer—but I say to you—here is my happiness—here is my life—take it—I have no strength to dispute it with you!"

These touching words, full of mournful resignation and almost hopeless reliance, gave the finishing stroke to the indecision of M. Baleinier. Already deeply moved by this scene, and without reflecting on the consequences of what he was about to do, he determined at all events to dissipate the terrible and unjust fears with which he had inspired Adrienne. Sentiments of remorse and pity, which now animated the physician, were visible in his countenance.

Alas! they were too visible. The moment he approached to take the hand of Mdlle. de Cardoville, a low but sharp voice exclaimed from behind the wicket: "M. Baleinier!"

"Rodin!" muttered the startled doctor to himself; "he's been spying me!"

"Who calls you?" asked the lady of the physician.

"A person that I promised to meet here this morning," replied he, with the utmost depression, "to go with him to St. Mary's Convent, which is close at hand."

"And what answer have you to give me?" said Adrienne, with mortal anguish.

After a moment's solemn silence, during which he turned his face towards the wicket, the doctor replied, in a voice of deep emotion: "I am—what I have always been—a friend incapable of deceiving you."

"Adrienne became deadly pale. Then, extending her hand to M. Baleinier, she said to him in a voice that she endeavored to render calm: "Thank you—I will have courage—but will it be very long?"

"Perhaps a month. Solitude, reflection, a proper regimen, my attentive care, may do much. You will be allowed everything that is compatible with your situation. Every attention will be paid you. If this room displeases you, I will see you have another."

"No—this or another—it is of little consequence," answered Adrienne,with a air of the deepest dejection.

"Come, come! be of good courage. There is no reason to despair."

"Perhaps you flatter me," said Adrienne, with the shadow of a smile. "Return soon," she added, "my dear M. Baleinier! my only hope rests in you now."

Her head fell upon her bosom, her hands upon her knees, and she remained sitting on the edge of the bed, pale, motionless, overwhelmed with woe.

"Mad!" she said, when M. Baleinier had disappeared. "Perhaps mad!"

* * * * * * *

We have enlarged upon this episode, much less romantic than it may appear. Many times have motives of interest or vengeance, or perfidious machination, led to the abuse of the imprudent facility with which inmates are received in certain private lunatic asylums, from the hands of their families or friends.

We shall subsequently explain our views, as to the establishment of a system of inspection, by the crown or the civil magistrates, for the periodical survey of these institutions, and others of no less importance, at present placed beyond the reach of all superintendence. These latter are the nunneries of which we will presently have an example.

CHAPTER XLVI.

PRESENTIMENTS.

WHILST the preceding events took place in Dr. Baleinier's asylum, other scenes were passing about the same hour, at Frances Baudoin's, in the Rue Brise-Miche.

Seven o'clock in the morning had just struck at St. Méry church; the day was dark and gloomy, and the sleet rattled against the windows of the joyless chamber of Dagobert's wife.

As yet ignorant of her son's arrest, Frances had waited for him the whole of the preceding evening, and a good part of the night, with the most anxious uneasiness; yielding at length to fatigue and sleep, about three o'clock in the morning, she had thrown herself on a mattress beside the bed of Rose and Blanche. But she rose with the first dawn of day, to ascend to Agricola's garret, in the very faint hope that he might have returned home some hours before.

Rose and Blanche had just risen, and dressed themselves. They were alone in the sad, chilly apartment. Spoil-sport, whom Dagobert had left in Paris, was stretched at full length near the cold stove: with his long muzzle resting on his forepaws, he kept his eye fixed on the sisters.

Having slept but little during the night, they had perceived the agitation and anguish of Dagobert's wife. They had seen her walk up and down, now talking to herself, now listening to the least noise that came up the staircase, and now kneeling before the crucifix placed at one extremity of the room. The orphans were not aware, that, whilst she prayed with fervor on behalf of her son, this excellent woman was praying for them also. For the state of their souls filled her with anxiety and alarm.

The day before, when Dagobert had set out for Chartres, Frances, having assisted Rose and Blanche to rise, had invited them to say their morning prayer: they answered with the utmost simplicity, that they did not know any, and that they never more than addressed their mother, who was in heaven. When Frances, struck with painful surprise, spoke to them of catechism, confirmation, communion, the sisters opened widely their large eyes with astonishment, understanding nothing of such talk.

According to her simple faith, terrified at the ignorance of the young girls in matters of religion, Dagobert's wife

believed their souls to be in the greatest peril, the more so as, having asked them if they had ever been baptized (at the same time explaining to them the nature of that sacrament), the orphans answered they did not think they had, since there was neither church nor priest in the village where they were born, during their mother's exile in Siberia.

Placing one's self in the position of Frances, you may understand how much she was grieved and alarmed; for, in her eyes, these young girls, whom she already loved tenderly, so charmed was she with their sweet disposition, were nothing but poor heathens, innocently doomed to eternal damnation. So, unable to restrain her tears, or conceal her horrors, she had clasped them in her arms, promising immediately to attend to their salvation, and regretting that Dagobert had not thought of having them baptized by the way. Now, it must be confessed, that this notion had never once occurred to the ex-grenadier.

When she went to her usual Sunday devotions, Frances had not dared to take Rose and Blanche with her, as their complete ignorance of sacred things would have rendered their presence at church, if not useless, scandalous; but, in her own fervent prayers she implored celestial mercy for these orphans, who did not themselves know the desperate position of their souls.

Rose and Blanche were now left alone, in the absence of Dagobert's wife. They were still dressed in mourning, their charming faces seeming even more pensive than usual. Though they were accustomed to a life of misfortune, they had been struck, since their arrival in the Rue Brise-Miche, with the painful contrast between the poor dwelling which they had come to inhabit, and the wonders which their young imagination had conceived of Paris, that golden city of their dreams. But soon this natural astonishment was replaced by thoughts of singular gravity for their age. The contemplation of such honest and laborious poverty made the orphans have reflections no longer those of children, but of young women. Assisted by their admirable spirit of justice, and of sympathy for all that is good, by their noble heart, by a character at once delicate and courageous, they had observed and meditated much during the last twenty-four hours.

"Sister," said Rose to Blanche, when Frances had quitted the room, "Dagobert's poor wife is very uneasy. Did you remark in the night,—how agitated she was? how she wept and prayed?"

"I was grieved to see it, sister, and wondered what could be the cause."

"I am almost afraid to guess. Perhaps we may be the cause of her uneasiness?"

"Why so, sister? Because we cannot say prayers, nor tell if we have ever been baptized?"

"That seemed to give her a good deal of pain, it is true: I was quite touched by it, for it proves that she loves us tenderly. But I could not understand how we ran such terrible danger as she said we did."

"Nor I either, sister. We have always tried not to displease our mother, who sees and hears us."

"We love those who love us; we hate nobody; we are resigned to whatever may happen to us. So, who can reproach us with any harm?"

"No one. But, perhaps, we may do some without meaning it."

"We?"

"Yes, and therefore I thought: We may perhaps be the cause of her uneasiness."

"How so?"

"Listen, sister! yesterday Madame Baudoin tried to work at those sacks of coarse cloth there on the table."

"Yes; but in about an half-hour, she told us sorrowfully, that she could not go on, because her eyes failed her, and she could not see clearly."

"So that she is not able to earn her living."

"No—but her son, M. Agricola, works for her. He looks so good, so gay, so frank, and so happy to devote himself for his mother. Oh, indeed! he is the worthy brother of our angel Gabriel!"

"You will see my reason for speaking of this. Our good old Dagobert told us, that, when we arrived here, he had only a few pieces of money left."

"That is true."

"Now both he and his wife are unable to earn their living: what can a poor old soldier like him do?"

"You are right; he only knows how to love us, and take care of us, like his children."

"It must then be M. Agricola who will have to support his father; for Gabriel is a poor priest, who possesses nothing, and can render no assistance to those who have brought him up. So M. Agricola will have to support the whole family by himself."

"Doubtless—he owes it to father and mother—it is his duty, and he will do it with a good will."

"Yes, sister—but he owes us nothing."

"What do you say, Blanche?"

"He is obliged to work for us also, as we possess nothing in the world."

"I had not thought of that. True."

"It is all very well, sister, for our father to be Duke and Marshal of France, as Dagobert tells us, it is all very well for us to hope great things from this medal, but as long as father is not here, and our hopes are not realized, we shall be merely poor orphans, obliged to remain a burden to this honest family, to whom we already owe so much, and who find it so hard to live, that——"

"Why do you pause, sister?"

"What I am about to say would make other people laugh; but you will understand it. Yesterday, when Dagobert's wife saw poor Spoil-sport at his dinner, she said, sorrowfully: "Alas! he eats as much as a man!"—so that I could almost have cried to hear her. They must be very poor, and yet we have come to increase their poverty."

The sisters looked sadly at each other, while Spoil-sport pretended not to know they were talking of his voracity.

"Sister, I understand," said Rose, after a moment's silence. "Well, we must not be at the charge of any one. We are young, and have courage. Till our fate is decided, let us fancy ourselves daughters of workmen. After all, is not our grandfather a workman? Let us find some employment, and earn our own living. It must be so proud and happy to earn one's living!"

"Good little sister," said Blanche, kissing Rose. "What happiness! You have forestalled my thought; kiss me!"

"How so?"

"Your project is mine exactly. Yesterday, when I heard Dagobert's wife complain so sadly that she had lost her sight, I looked into your large eyes, which reminded me of my own, and said to myself: 'Well! this poor old woman may have lost her sight, but Rose and Blanche Simon can see pretty clearly'—which is a compensation," added Blanche, with a smile.

"And, after all," resumed Rose, smiling in her turn, "the young ladies in question are not so very awkward, as not to be able to sew up great sacks of coarse cloth—though it may chafe their fingers a little."

"So we had both the same thought, as usual; only I

wished to surprise you, and waited till we were alone, to tell you my plan."

"Yes, but there is something teases me."

"What is that?"

"First of all, Dagobert and his wife will be sure to say to us: 'Young ladies, you are not fitted for such work. What, daughters of a Marshal of France sewing up great ugly bags!' And then, if we insist upon it, they will add: 'Well, we have no work to give you. If you want any, you must hunt for it.' What would Misses Simon do then?"

"The fact is, that when Dagobert has made up his mind to anything——"

"Oh! even then, if we coax him well——"

"Yes, in certain things; but in others he is immovable. It is just as when upon the journey, we wished to prevent his doing so much for us."

"Sister, an idea strikes me," cried Rose, "an excellent idea!"

"What is it? quick!"

"You know the young woman they call Mother Bunch, who appears to be so serviceable and persevering?"

"Oh yes! and so timid and discreet. She seems always to be afraid of giving offence, even if she looks at one. Yesterday, she did not perceive that I saw her; but her eyes were fixed on you with so good and sweet an expression, that tears came into mine at the very sight of it."

"Well, we must ask her how she gets work, for certainly she lives by her labor."

"You are right. She will tell us all about it; and when we know, Dagobert may scold us, or try to make great ladies of us, but we will be as obstinate as he is."

"That is it; we must show some spirit! We will prove to him, as he says himself, that we have soldier's blood in our veins."

"We will say to him: 'Suppose, as you say, we should one day be rich, my good Dagobert, we shall only remember this time with the more pleasure.'"

"It is agreed then, is it not, Rose? The first time we are alone with Mother Bunch, we must make her our confidant, and ask her for information. She is so good a person, that she will not refuse us."

"And when father comes home, he will be pleased, I am sure, with our courage."

"And will approve our wish to support ourselves, as if we were alone in the world."

On these words of her sister, Rose started. A cloud of sadness, almost of alarm, passed over her charming countenance, as she exclaimed: "Oh, sister, what a horrible idea!"

"What is the matter? your look frightens me."

"At the moment I heard you say, that our father would approve our wish to support ourselves, as if we were alone in the world—a frightful thought struck me—I know not why—but feel how my heart beats—just as if some misfortune were about to happen us."

"It is true; your poor heart beats violently. But what was this thought? You alarm me."

"When we were prisoners, they did not at least separate us, and, besides, the prison was a kind of shelter——"

"A sad one, though shared with you."

"But if, when arrived here, any accident had parted us from Dagobert—if we had been left alone, without help, in this great town?"

"Oh, sister! do not speak of that. It would indeed be terrible. What would become of us, kind heaven?"

This cruel thought made the girls remain for a moment speechless with emotion. Their sweet faces, which had just before glowed with a noble hope, grew pale and sad. After a pretty long silence, Rose uplifted her eyes, now filled with tears, "Why does this thought," she said, trembling, "affect us so deeply, sister? My heart sinks within me, as if it were really to happen to us."

"I feel as frightened as you yourself. Alas! were we both to be lost in this immense city, what would become of us?"

"Do not let us give way to such ideas, Blanche! Are we not here in Dagobert's house, in the midst of good people?"

"And yet, sister," said Rose, with a pensive air, "it is perhaps good for us to have had this thought."

"Why so?"

"Because we shall now find this poor lodging all the better, as it affords a shelter from all our fears. And when, thanks to our labor, we are no longer a burden to any one, what more can we need until the arrival of our father?"

"We shall want for nothing—there you are right—but still, why did this thought occur to us, and why does it weigh so heavily on our minds?"

"Yes, indeed—why? Are we not here in the midst of friends that love us? How could we suppose that we should ever be left alone in Paris? It is impossible that such a misfortune should happen to us—is it not, my dear sister?"

"Impossible!" said Rose, shuddering. "If the day before

we reached that village in Germany, where poor Jovial was killed, any one had said to us: 'To-morrow, you will be in prison'—we should have answered as now: 'It is impossible. Is not Dagobert here to protect us; what have we to fear?' And yet, sister, the day after we were in prison at Leipsic."

"Oh! do not speak thus, my dear sister! It frightens me."

By a sympathetic impulse, the orphans took one another by the hand, while they pressed close together, and looked around with involuntary fear. The sensation they felt was in fact deep, strange, inexplicable, and yet lowering—one of those dark presentiments which come over us, in spite of ourselves—those fatal gleams of prescience, which throw a lurid light on the mysterious profundities of the future.

Unaccountable glimpses of divination! often no sooner perceived than forgotten—but, when justified by the event, appearing with all the attributes of an awful fatality!

* * * * * * *

The daughters of Marshal Simon were still absorbed in the mournful reverie which these singular thoughts had awakened, when Dagobert's wife, returning from her son's chamber, entered the room with a painfully agitated countenance.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE LETTER.

Frances' agitation was so perceptible that Rose could not help exclaiming: "Good gracious, what is the matter?"

"Alas, my dear young ladies! I can no longer conceal it from you," said Frances, bursting into tears. "Since yesterday I have not seen him. I expected my son to supper as usual, and he never came; but I would not let you see how much I suffered. I continued to expect him, minute after minute; for ten years he has never gone up to bed without coming to kiss me; so I spent a good part of the night close to the door, listening if I could hear his step. But he did not come; and, at last, about three o'clock in the morning, I threw myself down upon the mattress. I have just been to see (for I still had a faint hope), if my son had come in this morning——"

"Well, madame?"

"There is no sign of him!" said the poor mother, drying her eyes.

Rose and Blanche looked at each other with emotion; the same thought filled the minds of both; if Agricola should not return, how would this family live? would they not, in such an event, become doubly burdensome?

"But, perhaps, madame," said Blanche, "M. Agricola remained too late at his work to return home last night."

"Oh! no, no! he would have returned in the middle of the night, because he knew what uneasiness he would cause me by stopping out. Alas! some misfortune must have happened to him! Perhaps he has been injured at the forge, he is so persevering at his work. Oh, my poor boy! and, as if I did not feel enough anxiety about him, I am also uneasy about the poor young woman who lives upstairs."

"Why so, madame?"

"When I left my son's room, I went into hers, to tell her my grief, for she is almost a daughter to me; but I did not find her in the little closet where she lives, and the bed had not even been slept in. Where can she have gone so early—she, that never goes out?"

Rose and Blanche looked at each other with fresh uneasiness, for they counted much upon Mother Bunch to help them in the resolution they had taken. Fortunately, both they and Frances were soon to be satisfied on this head, for they heard two low knocks at the door, and the sempstress's voice, saying: "Can I come in, Mrs. Baudoin?"

By a spontaneous impulse, Rose and Blanche ran to the door, and opened it to the young girl. Sleet and snow had been falling incessantly since the evening before; the gingham dress of the young sempstress, her scanty cotton shawl, and the black net cap, which, leaving uncovered two thick bands of chestnut hair, encircled her pale and interesting countenance, were all dripping wet; the cold had given a livid appearance to her thin, white hands; it was only in the fire of her blue eyes, generally so soft and timid, that one perceived the extraordinary energy which this frail and fearful creature had gathered from the emergency of the occasion.

"Dear me! where do you come from, my good Mother Bunch?" said Frances. "Just now, in going to see if my son had returned, I opened your door, and was quite astonished to find you gone out so early."

"I bring you news of Agricola."

"Of my son!" cried Frances, trembling all over. "What has happened to him? Did you see him?—Did you speak to him?—Where is he?"

"I did not see him, but I know where he is." Then, perceiving that Frances grew very pale, the girl added: "He is well; he is in no danger."

"Blessed be God, who has pity on a poor sinner!—who yesterday restored me my husband, and to-day, after a night of cruel anguish, assures me of the safety of my child!" So saying, Frances knelt down upon the floor, and crossed herself with fervor.

During the moment of silence, caused by this pious action, Rose and Blanche approached Mother Bunch, and said to her in a low voice, with an expression of touching interest: "How wet you are! you must be very cold. Take care you do not get ill. We did not venture to ask Madame Frances to light the fire in the stove, but now we will do so."

Surprised and affected by the kindness of Marshal Simon's daughters, the hunchback, who was more sensible than others to the least mark of kindness, answered them with a look of ineffable gratitude: "I am much obliged to you, young ladies; but I am accustomed to the cold, and am moreover so anxious that I do not feel it."

"And my son?" said Frances, rising after she had remained some moments on her knees; "why did he stay out all night? And could you tell me where to find him, my good girl? Will he soon come? why is he so long?"

"I assure you, Agricola is well; but I must inform you, that for some time——"

"Well?"

"You must have courage, mother."

"Oh! the blood runs cold in my veins. What has happened? why shall I not see him?"

"Alas, he is arrested."

"Arrested!" cried Rose and Blanche, with affright.

"Father! Thy will be done!" said Frances; "but it is a great misfortune. Arrested! for what? He is so good and honest, that there must be some mistake."

"The day before yesterday," resumed Mother Bunch, "I received an anonymous letter, by which I was informed that Agricola might be arrested at any moment, on account of his song. We agreed together that he should go to the rich young lady in the Rue de Babylone, who had offered him her services, and ask her to procure bail for him, to

prevent his going to prison. Yesterday morning he set out to go to the young lady's."

"And neither of you told me anything of all this—why did you hide it from me?"

"That we might not make you uneasy, mother; for, counting on the generosity of that young lady, I expected Agricola back every moment. When he did not come yesterday evening, I said to myself: 'Perhaps the necessary formalities with regard to the bail have detained him.' But the time passed on, and he did not make his appearance. So, I watched all night, expecting him."

"So you did not go to bed either, my good girl?"

"No, I was too uneasy. This morning, not being able to conquer my fears, I went out before dawn. I remembered the address of the young lady in the Rue de Babylone, and I ran thither."

"Oh, well!" said Frances, with anxiety; "you were in the right. According to what my son told us, that young lady appeared very good and generous."

Mother Bunch shook her head sorrowfully; a tear glittered in her eyes, as she continued: "It was still dark when I arrived at the Rue de Babylone; I waited till daylight was come."

"Poor child! you, who are so weak and timid," said Frances, with deep feeling, "to go so far, and in this dreadful weather!—Oh, you have been a real daughter to me!"

"Has not Agricola been like a brother to me!" said Mother Bunch, softly, with a slight blush.

"When it was daylight," she resumed: "I ventured to ring at the door of the little summer-house; a charming young girl, but with a sad, pale countenance, opened the door to me. 'I come in the name of an unfortunate mother in despair,' said I to her immediately, for I was so poorly dressed that I feared to be sent away as a beggar; but seeing, on the contrary, that the young girl listened to me with kindness, I asked her if, the day before, a young workman had not come to solicit a great favor of her mistress. 'Alas! yes,' answered the young girl; 'my mistress was going to interest herself for him, and, hearing that he was in danger of being arrested, she concealed him here; unfortunately, his retreat was discovered, and yesterday afternoon, at four o'clock, he was arrested and taken to prison.'"

Though the orphans took no part in this melancholy conversation, the sorrow and anxiety depicted in their counte-

nances, showed how much they felt for the sufferings of Dagobert's wife.

"But the young lady?" cried Frances. "You should have tried to see her, my good Mother Bunch, and begged her not to abandon my son. She is so rich that she must have influence, and her protection might save us from great calamities."

"Alas!" said Mother Bunch, with bitter grief, "we must renounce this last hope."

"Why?" said Frances. "If this young lady is so good, she will have pity upon us, when she knows that my son is the only support of a whole family, and that for him to go to prison is worse than for another, because it will reduce us all to the greatest misery."

"But this young lady," replied the girl, "according to what I learned from her weeping maid, was taken last evening to a lunatic asylum: it appears she is mad."

"Mad! Oh! it is horrible for her, and for us also—for now there is no hope. What will become of us without my son? Oh, merciful heaven!" The unfortunate woman hid her face in her hands.

A profound silence followed this heart-rending outburst. Rose and Blanche exchanged mournful glances, for they perceived that their presence augmented the weighty embarrassments of this family. Mother Bunch, worn out with fatigue, a prey to painful emotions, and trembling with cold in her wet clothes, sank exhausted on a chair, and reflected on their desperate position.

That position was indeed a cruel one!

Often, in times of political disturbances, or of agitation amongst the laboring classes, caused by want of work, or by the unjust reduction of wages (the result of the powerful coalition of the capitalists)—often are whole families reduced, by a measure of preventive imprisonment, to as deplorable a position as that of Dagobert's household by Agricola's arrest—an arrest, which, as will afterwards appear, was entirely owing to Rodin's arts.

Now, with regard to this "precautionary imprisonment," of which the victims are almost always honest and industrious mechanics, driven to the necessity of combining together by the Inorganization of Labor and the Insufficiency of Wages, it is painful to see the law, which ought to be equal for all, refuse to strikers what it grants to masters—because the latter can dispose of a certain sum of money. Thus, under many circumstances, the rich man, by giving bail, can

escape the annoyance and inconveniences of a preventive incarceration; he deposits a sum of money, pledges his word to appear on a certain day, and goes back to his pleasures, his occupations, and the sweet delights of his family. Nothing can be better; an accused person is innocent till he is proved guilty; we cannot be too much impressed with that indulgent maxim. It is well for the rich man that he can avail himself of the mercy of the law. But how is it with the poor?

Not only has he no bail to give, for his whole capital consists of his daily labor; but it is upon him chiefly that the rigors of preventive measures must fall with a terrible and fatal force.

For the rich man, imprisonment is merely the privation of ease and comfort, tedious hours, and the pain of separation from his family—distresses not unworthy of interest, for all suffering deserves pity, and the tears of the rich man separated from his children are as bitter as those of the poor. But the absence of the rich man does not condemn his family to hunger and cold, and the incurable maladies caused by exhaustion and misery.

For the workman, on the contrary, imprisonment means want, misery, sometimes death, to those most dear to him. Possessing nothing, he is unable to find bail, and he goes to prison. But if he have, as it often happens, an old, infirm father or mother, a sick wife, or children in the cradle? What will become of this unfortunate family? They could hardly manage to live from day to day upon the wages of this man, wages almost always insufficient, and suddenly this only resource will be wanting for three or four months together.

What will this family do? To whom will they have recourse?

What will become of these infirm old men, these sickly wives, these little children, unable to gain their daily bread? If they chance to have a little linen and a few spare clothes, these will be carried to the pawnbroker's, and thus they will exist for a week or so—but afterwards?

And if winter adds the rigors of the season to this frightful and inevitable misery?

Then will the imprisoned artisan see in his mind's eye, during the long and sleepless nights, those who are dear to him, wan, gaunt, haggard, exhausted, stretched almost naked upon filthy straw, or huddled close together to warm their frozen limbs. And, should he afterwards be acquitted, it is

ruin and desolation that he finds on his return to his poor dwelling.

And then, after that long cessation from labor, he will find it difficult to return to his old employers. How many days will be lost in seeking for work! and a day without employment is a day without bread!

Let us repeat our opinion, that if, under various circumstances, the law did not afford to the rich the facility of giving bail, we could only lament over all such victims of individual and inevitable misfortune. But since the law does provide the means of setting provisionally at liberty those who possess a certain sum of money, why should it deprive of this advantage those very persons, for whom liberty is indeed indispensable, as it involves the existence of themselves and families?

Is there any remedy for this deplorable state of things? We believe there is.

The law has fixed the minimum of bail at five hundred francs. Now five hundred francs represent, upon the average, six months' labor of an industrious workman.

If he have a wife and two children (which is also about the average), it is evidently quite impossible for him to have saved any such sum.

So, to ask of such a man five hundred francs, to enable him to continue to support his family, is in fact to put him beyond the pale of the law, though, more than any one else, he requires its protection, because of the disastrous consequences which his imprisonment entails upon others.

Would it not be equitable and humane, a noble and salutary example, to accept, in every case where bail is allowed (and where the good character of the accused could be honorably established), moral guarantees, in the absence of material ones, from those who have no capital but their labor and their integrity—to accept the word of an honest man to appear upon the day of trial? Would it not be great and moral, in these days, to raise the value of the plighted word, and exalt man in his own eyes, by showing him that his promise was held to be sufficient security?

Will you so degrade the dignity of man, as to treat this proposition as an impossible and Utopian dream? We ask, how many prisoners of war have ever broken their parole, and if officers and soldiers are not brothers of the workingman?

Without exaggerating the virtue of promise-keeping in the honest and laborious poor, we feel certain, that an en-

gagement taken by the accused to appear on the day of trial would be always fulfilled, not only with fidelity, but with the warmest gratitude—for his family would not have suffered by his absence, thanks to the indulgence of the law.

There is also another fact, of which France may well be proud. It is, that her magistrates (although miserably paid as the army itself) are generally wise, upright, humane, and independent; they have the true feeling of their own useful and sacred mission; they know how to appreciate the wants and distresses of the working classes, with whom they are so often brought in contact; to them might be safely granted the power of fixing those cases in which a moral security, the only one that can be given by the honest and necessitous man, should be received as sufficient.*

Finally, if those who make the laws have so low an opinion of the people as to reject with disdain the suggestions we have ventured to throw out, let them at least so reduce the minimum of bail, as to render it available for those who have most need to escape the fruitless rigors of imprisonment. Let them take as their lowest limit, the month's wages of an artisan—say *eighty francs.*

This sum would still be exorbitant; but, with the aid of friends, the pawnbroker's, and some little advances, eighty francs might perhaps be found—not always, it is true—but still sometimes—and, at all events, many families would be rescued from frightful misery.

Having made these observations, let us return to Dagobert's family, who, in consequence of the preventive arrest of Agricola, were now reduced to an almost hopeless state.

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The anguish of Dagobert's wife increased, the more she reflected on her situation, for, including the marshal's daughters, four persons were left absolutely without resource. It must be confessed, however, that the excellent mother thought less of herself, than of the grief which her son must feel in thinking over her deplorable position.

At this moment there was a knock at the door.

"Who is there?" said Frances.

"It is me—Father Loriot."

* In another work, we have mentioned, with respect and sympathy, the excellent book of M. Prosper Tarbe, Procureur du Roi, upon "Work and Wages"—one of the best and most sterling productions that an enlightened love of humanity ever called forth from generous heart, and clear, practical intellect.

"Come in," said Dagobert's wife.

The dyer, who also performed the functions of a porter, appeared at the door of the room. This time, his arms were no longer of a bright apple-green, but of a magnificent violet.

"Mrs. Baudoin," said Father Loriot, "here is a letter that the giver of holy water at Saint Méry's has just brought from Abbé Dubois, with a request that I would bring it up to you immediately, as it is very pressing."

"A letter from my confessor?" said Frances, in astonishment; and, as she took it, added: "Thank you, Father Loriot."

"You do not want anything?"

"No, Father Loriot."

"My respects to the ladies!" and the dyer went out.

"Mother Bunch, will you read this letter for me?" said Frances, anxious to learn the contents of the missive in question.

"Yes, mother,"—and the young girl read as follows:

"'My Dear Madame Baudoin,—I am in the habit of hearing you Tuesday and Saturday, but I shall not be at liberty either to-morrow or the last day of the week; you must then come to me this morning, unless you wish to remain a whole week without approaching the tribunal of penance.'"

"Good heavens! a week!" cried Dagobert's wife. "Alas! I am only too conscious of the necessity of going there to-day, notwithstanding the trouble and grief in which I am plunged."

Then, addressing herself to the orphans, she continued: "Heaven has heard the prayers that I made for you, my dear young ladies; this very day I shall be able to consult a good and holy man with regard to the great dangers to which you are exposed. Poor dear souls, that are so innocent, and yet so guilty, without any fault of your own! Heaven is my witness, that my heart bleeds for you as much as for my son."

Rose and Blanche looked at each other in confusion; they could not understand the fears with which the state of their souls inspired the wife of Dagobert. The latter soon resumed, addressing the young sempstress:

"My good girl, will you render me yet another service?"

"Certainly."

"My husband took Agricola's week's wages with him to pay his journey to Chartres. It was all the money I had in the house; I am sure that my poor child had none about

him, and in prison he will perhaps want some. Therefore take my silver cup, fork, and spoon, the two pair of sheets that remain over, and my wadded silk shawl, that Agricola gave me on my birthday, and carry them all to the pawnbroker's. I will try and find out in which prison my son is confined, and will send him half of the little sum we get upon the things; the rest will serve us till my husband comes home. And then, what shall we do? What a blow for him—and only more misery in prospect—since my son is in prison, and I have lost my sight. Almighty Father!" cried the unfortunate mother, with an expression of impatient and bitter grief, "why am I thus afflicted? Have I not done enough to deserve some pity, if not for myself, at least for those belonging to me?" But immediately reproaching herself for this outburst, she added, "No, no! I ought to accept with thankfulness all that Thou sendest me. Forgive me for these complaints, or punish only myself!"

"Be of good courage, mother!" said Mother Bunch. "Agricola is innocent, and will not remain long in prison."

"But now I think of it," resumed Dagobert's wife, "to go to the pawnbroker's will make you lose much time, my poor girl."

"I can make up that in the night, Madame Frances; I could not sleep, knowing you in such trouble. Work will amuse me."

"Yes, but the candles——"

"Never mind, I am a little beforehand with my work," said the poor girl, telling a falsehood.

"Kiss me, at least," said Frances, with moist eyes, "for you are the very best creature in the world." So saying, she hastened out of the room.

Rose and Blanche were left alone with Mother Bunch; at length had arrived the moment for which they had waited with so much impatience. Dagobert's wife proceeded to St. Méry Church, where her confessor was expecting to see her.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CONFESSIONAL.

Nothing could be more gloomy than the appearance of St. Méry Church, on this dark and snowy winter's day. Frances stopped a moment beneath the porch, to behold a lugubrious spectacle.

While a priest was mumbling some words in a low voice, two or three dirty choristers, in soiled surplices, were chanting the prayers for the dead, with an absent and sullen air, round a plain deal coffin, followed only by a sobbing old man and a child, miserably clad. The beadle and the sacristan, very much displeased at being disturbed for so wretched a funeral, had not deigned to put on their liveries, but, yawning with impatience, waited for the end of the ceremony, so useless to the interests of the establishment. At length, a few drops of holy water being sprinkled on the coffin, the priest handed the brush to the beadle, and retired.

Then took place one of those shameful scenes, the necessary consequence of an ignoble and sacrilegious traffic, so frequent with regard to the burials of the poor, who cannot afford to pay for tapers, high mass, or violins—for now St. Thomas Aquinas' Church has violins even for the dead.

The old man stretched forth his hand to the sacristan to receive the brush. "Come, look sharp!" said that official, blowing on his fingers.

The emotion of the old man was profound, and his weakness extreme; he remained for a moment without stirring, while the brush was clasped tightly in his trembling hand. In that coffin was his daughter, the mother of the ragged child who wept by his side—his heart was breaking at the thought of that last farewell; he stood motionless, and his bosom heaved with convulsive sobs.

"Now, will you make haste?" said the brutal beadle. "Do you think we are going to sleep here?"

The old man quickened his movements. He made the sign of the cross over the corpse, and, stooping down, was about to place the brush in the hand of his grandson, when the sacristan, thinking the affair had lasted long enough, snatched the sprinkling-brush from the child, and made a sign to the bearers to carry away the coffin—which was immediately done.

"Wasn't that old beggar a slow coach?" said the beadle to his companion, as they went back to the sacristy. "We shall hardly have time to get breakfast, and to dress ourselves for the bang-up funeral of this morning. That will be something like a dead man, that's worth the trouble. I shall shoulder my halberd in style!"

"And mount your colonel's epaulets, to throw dust in the eyes of the women that let out the chairs—eh, you old rascal!" said the other, with a sly look.

"What can I do, Catillard? When one has a fine figure,

it must be seen," answered the beadle, with a triumphant air. "I cannot blind the women to prevent their losing their hearts!"

Thus conversing; the two men reached the sacristy. The sight of the funeral had only increased the gloom of Frances. When she entered the church, seven or eight persons, scattered about upon chairs, alone occupied the damp and icy building. One of the distributors of holy water, an old fellow with a rubicund, joyous, wine-bibbing face, seeing Frances approach the little font, said to her in a low voice: "Abbé Dubois is not yet in his box. Be quick, and you will have the first wag of his beard."

Though shocked at this pleasantry, Frances thanked the irreverent speaker, made devoutly the sign of the cross, advanced some steps into the church, and knelt down upon the stones to repeat the prayer, which she always offered up before approaching the tribunal of penance. Having said this prayer, she went towards a dark corner of the church, in which was an oaken confessional, with a black curtain drawn across the grated door. The places on each side were vacant; so Frances knelt down in that upon the right hand, and remained there for some time absorbed in bitter reflections.

In a few minutes, a priest of tall stature, with gray hair and a stern countenance, clad in a long black cassock, stalked slowly along one of the aisles of the church. A short, old, misshapen man, badly dressed, leaning upon an umbrella, accompanied him, and from time to time whispered in his ear, when the priest would stop to listen with a profound and respectful deference.

As they approached the confessional, the short old man, perceiving Frances on her knees, looked at the priest with an air of interrogation. "It is she," said the clergyman.

"Well, in two or three hours, they will expect the two girls at St. Mary's Convent. I count upon it," said the old man.

"I hope so, for the sake of their souls," answered the priest; and, bowing gravely, he entered the confessional. The short old man quitted the church.

This old man was Rodin. It was on leaving Saint Méry's that he went to the lunatic asylum, to assure himself that Dr. Baleinier had faithfully executed his instructions with regard to Adrienne de Cardoville.

Frances was still kneeling in the interior of the confessional. One of the slides opened, and a voice began to speak.

It was that of the priest, who, for the last twenty years had been the confessor of Dagobert's wife, and exercised over her an irresistible and all-powerful influence.

"You received my letter?" said the voice.

"Yes, father."

"Very well—I listen to you."

"Bless me, father—for I have sinned!" said Frances.

The voice pronounced the formula of the benediction. Dagobert's wife answered "amen," as was proper, said her *confiteor* to "It is my fault," gave an account of the manner in which she had performed her last penance, and then proceeded to the enumeration of the new sins, committed since she had received absolution.

For this excellent woman, a glorious martyr of industry and maternal love, always fancied herself sinning: her conscience was incessantly tormented by the fear that she had committed some incomprehensible offence. This mild and courageous creature, who, after a whole life of devotion, ought to have passed what time remained to her in calm serenity of soul, looked upon herself as a great sinner, and lived in continual anxiety, doubting much her ultimate salvation.

"Father," said Frances, in a trembling voice, "I accuse myself of omitting my evening prayer the day before yesterday. My husband, from whom I had been separated for many years, returned home. The joy and the agitation caused by his arrival, made me commit this great sin."

"What next?" said the voice, in a severe tone, which redoubled the poor woman's uneasiness.

"Father, I accuse myself of falling into the same sin yesterday evening. I was in a state of mortal anxiety, for my son did not come home as usual, and I waited for him minute after minute, till the hour had passed over."

"What next?" said the voice.

"Father, I accuse myself of having told a falsehood all this week to my son, by letting him think that on account of his reproaching me for neglecting my health, I had taken a little wine for my dinner—whereas I had left it for him, who has more need of it, because he works so much."

"Go on!" said the voice.

"Father, I accuse myself of a momentary want of resignation this morning, when I learned that my poor son was arrested; instead of submitting with respect and gratitude to this new trial which the Lord hath sent me—alas! I rebelled against it in my grief—and of this I accuse myself."

"A bad week," said the priest, in a tone of still greater severity, "a bad week—for you have always put the creature before the Creator. But proceed!"

"Alas, father!" resumed Frances, much dejected, "I know that I am a great sinner; and I fear that I am on the road to sins of a still graver kind."

"Speak!"

"My husband brought with him from Siberia two young orphans, daughters of Marshal Simon. Yesterday morning, I asked them to say their prayers, and I learned from them, with as much fright as sorrow, that they know none of the mysteries of our holy faith, though they are fifteen years old. They have never received the sacrament, nor are they even baptized, father—not even baptized!"

"They must be heathens!" cried the voice, in a tone of angry surprise.

"That is what so much grieves me, father; for, as I and my husband are in the room of parents to these young orphans, we should be guilty of the sins which they might commit—should we not, father?"

"Certainly,—since you take the place of those who ought to watch over their souls. The shepherd must answer for his flock," said the voice.

"And if they should happen to be in mortal sin, father, I and my husband would be in mortal sin?"

"Yes," said the voice; "you take the place of their parents; and fathers and mothers are guilty of all the sins which their children commit when those sins arise from the want of a Christian education."

"Alas, father! what am I to do? I address myself to you as I would to heaven itself. Every day, every hour, that these poor young girls remain heathens, may contribute to bring about their eternal damnation, may it not, father?" said Frances, in a tone of the deepest emotion.

"Yes," answered the voice; "and the weight of this terrible responsibility rests upon you and your husband; you have the charge of souls!"

"Lord, have mercy upon me!" said Frances, weeping.

"You must not grieve yourself thus," answered the voice, in a softer tone; "happily for these unfortunates, they have met you upon the way. They will have in you and your husband good and pious examples—for I suppose that your husband, though formerly an ungodly person, now practices his religious duties!"

"We must pray for him, father," said Frances, sorrow-

fully; "grace has not yet touched his heart. He is like my poor child, who has also not been called to holiness. Ah, father!" said Frances, drying her tears, "these thoughts are my heaviest cross."

"So neither your husband nor your son practises," resumed the voice, in a tone of reflection; "this is serious—very serious. The religious education of these two unfortunate girls has yet to begin. In your house, they will have ever before them the most deplorable examples. Take care! I have warned you. You have the charge of souls—your responsibility is immense!"

"Father, it is that which makes me wretched—I am at a loss what to do. Help me, and give me your counsels: for twenty years your voice has been to me as the voice of the Lord."

"Well! you must agree with your husband to send these unfortunate girls to some religious house where they may be instructed."

"We are too poor, father, to pay for their schooling, and unfortunately my son has just been put in prison for songs that he wrote."

"Behold the fruit of impiety," said the voice, severely; "look at Gabriel! he has followed my counsels, and is now the model of every Christian virtue."

"My son, Agricola, has had good qualities, father; he is so kind, so devoted!"

"Without religion," said the voice, with redoubled severity, "what you call good qualities are only vain appearances; at the least breath of the devil they will disappear—for the devil lurks in every soul that has no religion."

"Oh! my poor son!" said Frances, weeping; "I pray for him every day, that faith may enlighten him."

"I have always told you," resumed the voice, "that you have been too weak with him. God now punishes you for it. You should have parted from this irreligious son, and not sanctioned his impiety by loving him as you do. 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off,' saith the Scripture."

"Alas, father! you know it is the only time I have disobeyed you; but I could not bring myself to part from my son."

"Therefore is your salvation uncertain—but God is merciful. Do not fall into the same fault with regard to these young girls, whom Providence has sent you, that you might save them from eternal damnation. Do not plunge them into it by your own culpable indifference."

"Oh, father! I have wept and prayed for them."

"That is not sufficient. These unfortunate children cannot have any notion of good or evil. Their souls must be an abyss of scandal and impurity—brought up as they have been, by an impious mother, and a soldier devoid of religion."

"As for that, father," said Frances, with simplicity, "they are gentle as angels, and my husband, who has not quitted them since their birth, declares they have the best hearts in the world."

"Your husband has dwelt all his life in mortal sin," said the voice, harshly; "how can he judge of the state of souls? I repeat to you, that as you represent the parents of these unfortunates, it is not to-morrow, but it is to-day, and on the instant, that you must labor for their salvation, if you would not incur a terrible responsibility."

"It is true—I know it well, father—and I suffer as much from this fear as from grief at my son's arrest. But what is to be done? I could not instruct these young girls at home—for I have not the knowledge—I have only faith—and then my poor husband, in his blindness, makes game of sacred things, which my son, at least, respects in my presence, out of regard for me. Then, once more, father, come to my aid, I conjure you! Advise me: what is to be done?"

"We cannot abandon these two young souls to frightful perdition," said the voice, after a moment's silence: "there are not two ways of saving them: there is only one, and that is to place them in a religious house, where they may be surrounded by good and pious examples."

"Oh, father! if we were not so poor, or if I could still work, I would try to gain sufficient to pay for their board, and do for them as I did for Gabriel. Unfortunately, I have quite lost my sight; but you, father, know some charitable souls, and if you could get any of them to interest themselves for these poor orphans——"

"Where is their father?"

"He was in India; but, my husband tells me, he will soon be in France. That, however, is uncertain. Besides, it would make my heart bleed to see those poor children share our misery—which will soon be extreme—for we only live by my son's labor."

"Have these girls no relation here?" asked the voice.

"I believe not, father."

"It was their mother who entrusted them to your husband, to bring them to France?"

"Yes, father; he was obliged to set out yesterday for Chartres, on some very pressing business, as he told me."

It will be remembered that Dagobert had not thought fit to inform his wife of the hopes which the daughters of Marshal Simon founded on the possession of the medal, and that he had particularly charged them not to mention these hopes, even to Frances.

"So," resumed the voice, after a pause of some moments' duration, "your husband is not in Paris."

"No, father; but he will doubtless return this evening or to-morrow morning."

"Listen to me," said the voice, after another pause. "Every minute lost for those two young girls is a new step on the road to perdition. At any moment the hand of God may smite them, for He alone knows the hour of our death; and were they to die in the state in which they now are, they would most probably be lost to all eternity. This very day, therefore, you must open their eyes to the divine light, and place them in a religious house. It is your duty —it should be your desire!"

"Oh, yes, father! but, unfortunately, I am too poor, as I have already told you."

"I know it—you do not want for zeal or faith—but even were you capable of directing these young girls, the impious examples of your husband and son would daily destroy your work. Others must do for these orphans, in the name of Christian charity, that which you cannot do, though you are answerable for them before heaven."

"Oh, father! if, thanks to you, this good work could be accomplished, how grateful I should be!"

"It is not impossible. I know the superior of a convent, where these young girls would be instructed as they ought. The charge for their board would be diminished in consideration of their poverty; but, however small, it must be paid, and there would be also an outfit to furnish. All that would be too dear for you."

"Alas! yes, father."

"But, by taking a little from my poor-box, and by applying to one or two generous persons, I think I shall be able to complete the necessary sum, and so get the young girls received at the convent."

"Ah, father! you are my deliverer, and these children's."

"I wish to be so—but, in the interest of their salvation, and to make these measures really efficacious, I must attach some conditions to the support I offer you."

"Name them, father; they are accepted beforehand. Your commands shall be obeyed in everything."

"First of all, then, the children must be taken this very morning to the convent, by my housekeeper, to whom you must bring them almost immediately."

"Nay, father; that is impossible!" cried Frances.

"Impossible? why?"

"In the absence of my husband——"

"Well?"

"I dare not take such a step without consulting him."

"Not only must you abstain from consulting him, but the thing must be done during his absence."

"What, father? should I not wait for his return?"

"No, for two reasons," answered the priest, sternly: "first, because his hardened impiety would certainly lead him to oppose your pious resolution; secondly, because it is indispensable that these young girls should break off all connection with your husband, who, therefore, must be left in ignorance of the place of their retreat."

"But, father," said Frances, a prey to cruel doubt and embarrassment, "it is to my husband that these children were entrusted—and to dispose of them without his consent would be——"

"Can you instruct these children at your house—yes or no?" interrupted the voice.

"No, father, I cannot."

"Are they exposed to fall into a state of final impenitence by remaining with you—yes or no?"

"Yes, father, they are so exposed."

"Are you responsible, as you take the place of their parents, for the mortal sins they may commit—yes or no?"

"Alas, father! I am responsible before God."

"Is it in the interest of their eternal salvation that I enjoin you to place them this very day in a convent?"

"It is for their salvation, father."

"Well, then, choose!"

"But tell me, I entreat you, father, if I have the right to dispose of them without the consent of my husband?"

"The right! you have not only the right, but it is your sacred duty. Would you not be bound, I ask you, to rescue these unfortunate creatures from a fire, against the will of your husband, or during his absence? Well! you must now rescue them, not from a fire that will only consume the body, but from one in which their souls would burn to all eternity."

"Forgive me, I implore you, father," said the poor woman, whose indecision and anguish increased every minute; "satisfy my doubts!—How can I act thus, when I have sworn obedience to my husband?"

"Obedience for good—yes—but never for evil. You confess, that, were it left to him, the salvation of these orphans would be doubtful, and perhaps impossible."

"But, father," said Frances, trembling, "when my husband returns, he will ask me where are these children? Must I tell him a falsehood?"

"Silence is not falsehood; you will tell him that you cannot answer his question."

"My husband is the kindest of men; but such an answer will drive him almost mad. He has been a soldier, and his anger will be terrible, father," said Frances, shuddering at the thought.

"And were his anger a hundred times more terrible, you should be proud to brave it in so sacred a cause!" cried the voice, with indignation. "Do you think that salvation is to be so easily gained on earth? Since when does the sinner, that would walk in the way of the Lord, turn aside for the stones and briars that may bruise and tear him?"

"Pardon, father, pardon!" said Frances, with the resignation of despair. "Permit me to ask one more question, one only. Alas! if you do not guide me, how shall I find the way?"

"Speak!"

"When Marshal Simon arrives, he will ask his children of my husband. What answer can he then give to their father?"

"When Marshal Simon arrives, you will let me know immediately, and then—I will see what is to be done. The rights of a father are only sacred in so far as he makes use of them for the salvation of his children. Before and above the father on earth, is the Father in heaven, whom we must first serve. Reflect upon all this. By accepting what I propose to you, these young girls will be saved from perdition; they will not be at your charge; they will not partake of your misery; they will be brought up in a sacred institution, as, after all, the daughters of a Marshal of France ought to be—and, when their father arrives at Paris, if he be found worthy of seeing them again, instead of finding poor, ignorant, half-savage heathens, he will behold two girls, pious, modest, and well-informed, who, being acceptable with the Almighty, may invoke His mercy for their

father, who, it must be owned, has great need of it—being a man of violence, war, and battle. Now decide! Will you, on peril of your soul, sacrifice the welfare of these girls in this world and the next, because of an impious dread of your husband's anger?"

Though rude and fettered by intolerance, the confessor's language was (taking his view of the case) reasonable and just, because the honest priest was himself convinced of what he said; a blind instrument of Rodin, ignorant of the end in view, he believed firmly, that, in forcing Frances to place these young girls in a convent, he was performing a pious duty. Such was, and is, one of the most wonderful resources of the order to which Rodin belonged—to have for accomplices good and sincere people, who are ignorant of the nature of the plots in which they are the principal actors.

Frances, long accustomed to submit to the influence of her confessor, could find nothing to object to his last words. She resigned herself to follow his directions, though she trembled to think of the furious anger of Dagobert, when he should no longer find the children that a dying mother had confided to his care. But, according to the priest's opinion, the more terrible this anger might appear to her, the more she would show her pious humility by exposing herself to it.

"God's will be done, father!" said she, in reply to her confessor. "Whatever may happen, I will do my duty as a Christian—in obedience to your commands."

"And the Lord will reward you for what you may have to suffer in the accomplishment of this meritorious act. You promise then, before God, that you will not answer any of your husband's questions, when he asks you for the daughters of Marshal Simon?"

"Yes, father, I promise!" said Frances, with a shudder.

"And will preserve the same silence towards Marshal Simon himself, in case he should return, before his daughters appear to me sufficiently grounded in the faith to be restored to him?"

"Yes, father," said Frances, in a still fainter voice.

"You will come and give me an account of the scene that takes place between you and your husband, upon his return?"

"Yes, father; when must I bring the orphans to your house?"

"In an hour. I will write to the superior, and leave the letter with my housekeeper. She is a trusty person, and will conduct the young girls to the convent."

After she had listened to the exhortations of her confessor, and received absolution for her late sins, on condition of performing penance, Dagobert's wife left the confessional.

The church was no longer deserted. An immense crowd pressed into it, drawn thither by the pomp of the grand funeral, of which the beadle had spoken to the sacristan two hours before. It was with the greatest difficulty that Frances could reach the door of the church, now hung with sumptuous drapery.

What a contrast to the poor and humble train, which had that morning so timidly presented themselves beneath the porch!

The numerous clergy of the parish, in full procession, advanced majestically to receive the coffin covered with a velvet pall; the watered silks and stuffs of their copes and stoles, their splendid silvered embroideries, sparkled in the light of a thousand tapers. The beadle strutted in all the glory of his brilliant uniform and flashing epaulets; on the opposite side walked in high glee the sacristan, carrying his whalebone staff with a magisterial air; the voice of the choristers, now clad in fresh, white surplices, rolled out in bursts of thunder; the trumpets' blare shook the windows; and upon the countenances of all those who were to have a share in the spoils of this rich corpse, this excellent corpse, this first-class corpse, a look of satisfaction was visible, intense and yet subdued, which suited admirably with the air and attitude of the two heirs, tall, vigorous fellows with florid complexions, who, without overstepping the limits of a charming modesty of enjoyment, seemed to cuddle and hug themselves most comfortably in their mourning cloaks.

Notwithstanding her simplicity and pious faith, Dagobert's wife was painfully impressed with this revolting difference between the reception of the rich and the poor man's coffin at the door of the house of God—for surely, if equality be ever real, it is in the presence of death and eternity!

The two sad spectacles she had witnessed, tended still further to depress the spirits of Frances. Having succeeded with no small trouble in making her way out of the church, she hastened to return to the Rue Brise-Miche, in order to fetch the orphans and conduct them to the housekeeper of her confessor, who was in her turn to take them to St. Mary's Convent, situated, as we know, next door to Dr. Baleinier's lunatic-asylum, in which Adrienne de Cardoville was confined.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MY LORD AND SPOIL-SPORT.

The wife of Dagobert, having quitted the church, arrived at the corner of the Rue Brise-Miche, when she was accosted by the distributor of holy water; he came running out of breath, to beg her to return to Saint-Méry's, where the Abbé Dubois had yet something of importance to say to her.

The moment Frances turned to go back, a hackney-coach stopped in front of the house she inhabited. The coachman quitted his box to open the door.

"Driver," said a stout woman dressed in black, who was seated in the carriage, and held a pug-dog upon her knees "ask if Mrs. Frances Baudoin lives in this house."

"Yes, ma'am," said the coachman.

The reader will no doubt have recognized Mrs. Grivois, head waiting-woman to the Princess de Saint-Dizier, accompanied by My Lord, who exercised a real tyranny over his mistress. The dyer, whom we have already seen performing the duties of a porter, being questioned by the coachman as to the dwelling of Frances, came out of his workshop, and advanced gallantly to the coach-door, to inform Mrs. Grivois, that Frances Baudoin did in fact live in the house, but that she was at present from home.

The arms, hands, and part of the face of Father Loriot were now of a superb gold-color. The sight of this yellow personage singularly provoked My Lord, and at the moment the dyer rested his hand upon the edge of the coach-window, the cur began to yelp frightfully, and bit him in the wrist.

"Oh! gracious heaven!" cried Mrs. Grivois, in an agony, whilst Father Loriot, withdrew his hand with precipitation; "I hope there is nothing poisonous in the dye that you have about you—my dog is so delicate!"

So saying, she carefully wiped the pug-nose, spotted with yellow. Father Loriot, not at all satisfied with this speech, when he had expected to receive some apology from Mrs. Grivois on account of her dog's behavior, said to her, as with difficulty he restrained his anger: "If you did not belong to the fair sex, which obliges me to respect you in the person of that wretched animal, I would have the pleasure of taking him by the tail, and making him in one minute a dog of the

brightest orange color, by plunging him into my cauldron, which is already on the fire."

"Dye my pet yellow!" cried Mrs. Grivois, in great wrath, as she descended from the hackney-coach, clasping My Lord tenderly to her bosom, and surveying Father Loriot with a savage look.

"I told you, Mrs. Baudoin is not at home," said the dyer, as he saw the pug-dog's mistress advance in the direction of the dark staircase.

"Never mind; I will wait for her," said Mrs. Grivois, tartly. "On which story does she live?"

"Up four pair!" answered Father Loriot, returning abruptly to his shop. And he added to himself, with a chuckle at the anticipation: "I hope Father Dagobert's big growler will be in a bad humor, and give that villainous pug a shaking by the skin of his neck."

Mrs. Grivois mounted the steep staircase with some difficulty, stopping at every landing-place to take breath, and looking about her with profound disgust. At length she reached the fourth story, and paused an instant at the door of the humble chamber, in which the two sisters and Mother Bunch then were.

The young sempstress was occupied in collecting the different articles that she was about to carry to the pawnbroker's. Rose and Blanche seemed happier, and somewhat less uneasy about the future; for they had learned from Mother Bunch, that, when they knew how to sew, they might between them earn eight francs a week, which would at least afford some assistance to the family.

The presence of Mrs. Grivois in Baudoin's dwelling was occasioned by a new resolution of Abbé d'Aigrigny and the Princess de Saint-Dizier; they had thought it more prudent to send Mrs. Grivois, on whom they could blindly depend, to fetch the young girls, and the confessor was charged to inform Frances, that it was not to his housekeeper, but to a lady that would call on her with a note from him, that she was to deliver the orphans, to be taken to a religious establishment.

Having knocked at the door, the waiting-woman of the Princess de Saint-Dizier entered the room, and asked for Frances Baudoin.

"She is not at home, madame," said Mother Bunch timidly, not a little astonished at so unexpected a visit, and casting down her eyes before the gaze of this woman.

"Then I will wait for her, as I have important affairs to

speak of," answered Mrs. Grivois, examining with curiosity and attention the faces of the two orphans, who also cast down their eyes with an air of confusion.

So saying, Madame Grivois sat down, not without some repugnance, in the old arm-chair of Dagobert's wife, and believing that she might now leave her favorite at liberty, she laid him carefully on the floor. Immediately, a low growl, deep and hollow, sounding from behind the arm-chair, made Mrs. Grivois jump from her seat, and sent the pug-dog, yelping with affright, and trembling through his fat, to take refuge close to his mistress, with all the symptoms of angry alarm.

"What! is there a dog here?" cried Mrs. Grivois, stooping precipitately to catch up My Lord, whilst, as if he wished himself to answer the question, Spoil-sport rose leisurely from his place behind the arm-chair, and appeared suddenly, yawning and stretching himself.

At sight of this powerful animal, with his double row of formidable pointed fangs, which he seemed to take delight in displaying as he opened his large jaws, Mrs. Grivois could not help giving utterance to a cry of terror. The snappish pug had at first trembled in all his limbs at the Siberian's approach; but, finding himself in safety on the lap of his mistress, he began to growl insolently, and to throw the most provoking glances at Spoil-sport. These the worthy companion of the deceased Jovial answered disdainfully by gaping anew; after which he went smelling round Mrs. Grivois with a sort of uneasiness, turned his back upon My Lord, and stretched himself at the feet of Rose and Blanche, keeping his large, intelligent eyes fixed upon them, as if he foresaw that they were menaced with some danger.

"Turn out that beast," said Mrs. Grivois, imperiously; "he frightens my dog, and may do him some harm."

"Do not be afraid, madame," replied Rose, with a smile; "Spoil-sport will do no harm, if he is not attacked."

"Never mind!" cried Mrs. Grivois; "an accident soon happens. The very sight of that enormous dog, with his wolf's head and terrible teeth, is enough to make one tremble at the injuries he might do one. I tell you to turn him out."

Mrs. Grivois had pronounced these last words in a tone of irritation, which did not sound at all satisfactory in Spoil-sport's ears; so he growled and showed his teeth, turning his head in the direction of the stranger.

"Be quiet, Spoil-sport!" said Blanche, sternly.

A new personage here entered the room, and put an end to this situation, which was embarrassing enough for the two young girls. It was a commissionaire, with a letter in his hand.

"What is it, sir?" asked Mother Bunch.

"A very pressing letter from the good man of the house; the dyer below stairs told me to bring it up here."

"A letter from Dagobert!" cried Rose and Blanche, with a lively expression of pleasure. "He is returned then? where is he?"

"I do not know whether the good man is called Dagobert or not," said the porter; "but he is an old trooper, with a gray moustache, and may be found close by, at the office of the Chartres coaches."

"That is he!" cried Blanche. "Give me the letter."

The porter handed it to the young girl, who opened it in all haste.

Mrs. Grivois was struck dumb with dismay; she knew that Dagobert had been decoyed from Paris, that the Abbé Dubois might have an opportunity to act with safety upon Frances. Hitherto, all had succeeded; the good woman had consented to place the young girls in the hands of a religious community—and now arrives this soldier, who was thought to be absent from Paris for two or three days at least, and whose sudden return might easily ruin this laborious machination, at the moment when it seemed to promise success.

"Oh!" said Blanche, when she had read the letter. "What a misfortune!"

"What is it, then, sister?" cried Rose.

"Yesterday, half way to Chartres, Dagobert perceived that he had lost his purse. He was unable to continue his journey; he took a place upon credit, to return, and he asks his wife to send him some money to the office, to pay what he owes."

"That's it," said the porter; "for the good man told me to make haste, because he was there in pledge."

"And nothing in the house!" cried Blanche. "Dear me! what is to be done?"

At these words, Mrs. Grivois felt her hopes revive for a moment, they were soon, however, dispelled by Mother Bunch, who exclaimed, as she pointed to the parcel she had just made up: "Be satisfied, dear young ladies! here is a resource. The pawnbroker's, to which I am going, is not far off, and I will take the money direct to M. Dagobert: in half an hour, at latest, he will be here."

"Oh, my dear friend! you are right," said Rose. "How good you are! you think of everything."

"And here," said Blanche, "is the letter, with the address upon it. Take that with you."

"Thank you," answered Mother Bunch: then, addressing the porter, she added: "Return to the person who sent you, and tell him I shall be at the coach-office very shortly."

"Infernal hunchback!" thought Mrs. Grivois, with suppressed rage, "she thinks of everything. Without her, we should have escaped the plague of this man's return. What is to be done now? The girls would not go with me, before the arrival of the soldier's wife: to propose it to them would expose me to a refusal, and might compromise all. Once more, what is to be done?"

"Do not be uneasy, ladies," said the porter as he went out; "I will go and assure the good man, that he will not have to remain long in pledge."

Whilst Mother Bunch was occupied in tying her parcel, in which she had placed the silver cup, fork, and spoon, Mrs. Grivois seemed to reflect deeply. Suddenly she started. Her countenance, which had been for some moments expressive of anxiety and rage, brightened up on the instant. She rose, still holding My Lord in her arms, and said to the young girls: "As Mrs. Baudoin does not come in, I am going to pay a visit in the neighborhood, and will return immediately. Pray tell her so!"

With these words Mrs. Grivois took her departure, a few minutes before Mother Bunch left.

CHAPTER L.

APPEARANCES.

After she had again endeavored to cheer up the orphans, the sewing-girl descended the stairs, not without difficulty, for, in addition to the parcel, which was already heavy, she had fetched down from her own room the only blanket she possessed—thus leaving herself without protection from the cold of her icy garret.

The evening before, tortured with anxiety as to Agricola's fate, the girl had been unable to work; the miseries of expectation and hope delayed had prevented her from doing so; now another day would be lost, and yet it was necessary to live. Those overwhelming sorrows, which deprive

the poor of the faculty of labor, are doubly dreaded; they paralyze the strength, and, with that forced cessation from toil, want and destitution are often added to grief.

But Mother Bunch, that complete incarnation of holiest duty, had yet strength enough to devote herself for the service of others. Some of the most frail and feeble creatures are endowed with extraordinary vigor of soul; it would seem as if, in these weak, infirm organizations, the spirit reigned absolute over the body, and knew how to inspire it with a factitious energy.

Thus, for the last twenty-four hours, Mother Bunch had neither slept nor eaten; she had suffered from the cold, through the whole of a frosty night. In the morning she had endured great fatigue, in going, amid rain and snow, to the Rue de Babylone and back, twice crossing Paris—and yet her strength was not exhausted—so immense is the power of the human heart!

She had just arrived at the corner of the Rue Saint Méry. Since the recent Rue des Prouvaires conspiracy, there were stationed in this populous quarter of the town a much larger number of police-officers than usual. Now the young sempstress, though bending beneath the weight of her parcel, had quickened her pace almost to a run, when, just as she passed in front of one of the police, two five-franc pieces fell on the ground behind her, thrown there by a stout woman in black, who followed her closely.

Immediately after, the stout woman pointed out the two pieces to the policeman, and said something hastily to him with regard to Mother Bunch, Then she withdrew at all speed in the direction of the Rue Brise-Miche.

The policeman, struck with what Mrs. Grivois had said to him (for it was that person), picked up the money, and, running after the humpback, cried out to her: "Hi, there! young woman, I say—stop! stop!"

On this outcry, several persons turned round suddenly, and, as always happens in those quarters of the town, a nucleus of five or six persons soon grew to a considerable crowd.

Not knowing that the policeman was calling to her, Mother Bunch only quickened her speed, wishing to get to the pawnbroker's as soon as possible, and trying to avoid touching any of the passers-by, so much did she dread the brutal and cruel railleries, to which her infirmity so often exposed her.

Suddenly, she heard many persons running after her, and at the same instant a hand was laid rudely on her shoulder.

It was the policeman, followed by another officer, who had been drawn to the spot by the noise. Mother Bunch turned round, struck with as much surprise as fear.

She found herself in the centre of a crowd, composed chiefly of that hideous scum, idle and in rags, insolent and malicious, besotted with ignorance, brutalized by want, and always loafing about the corners. Workmen are scarcely ever met with in these mobs, for they are for the most part engaged in their daily labors.

"Come, can't you hear? you are deaf as Punch's dog," said the policeman, seizing Mother Bunch so rudely by the arm, that she let her parcel fall at her feet.

When the unfortunate girl, looking round in terror, saw herself exposed to all those insolent, mocking, malicious glances, when she beheld the cynical and coarse grimace on so many ignoble and filthy countenances, she trembled in all her limbs, and became fearfully pale. No doubt the policeman had spoken roughly to her; but how could he speak otherwise to a poor deformed girl, pale and trembling, with her features agitated by grief and fear—to a wretched creature, miserably clad, who wore in winter a thin cotton gown, soiled with mud, and wet with melted snow—for the poor sempstress had walked much and far that morning. So the policeman resumed, with great severity, following that supreme law of appearances which makes poverty always suspected: "Stop a bit, young woman! it seems you are in a mighty hurry, to let your money fall without picking it up."

"Was her blunt hid in her hump?" said the hoarse voice of a match-boy, a hideous and repulsive specimen of precocious depravity.

This sally was received with laughter, shouts, and hooting, which served to complete the sewing-girl's dismay and terror. She was hardly able to answer, in a feeble voice, as the policeman handed her the two pieces of silver: "This money, sir, is not mine."

"You lie," said the other officer, approaching; "a respectable lady saw it drop from your pocket."

"I assure you, sir, it is not so," answered Mother Bunch, trembling.

"I tell you that you lie," resumed the officer; "for the lady, struck with your guilty and frightened air, said to me: 'Look at yonder little hunchback, running away with that large parcel, and letting her money fall without even stopping to pick it up—it is not natural.'"

"Bobby," resumed the match-vendor in his hoarse voice, "be on your guard! Feel her hump, for that is her luggage-van. I'm sure that you'll find boots, and cloaks, and umbrellas, and clocks in it—for I just heard the hour strike in the bend of her back."

Then came fresh bursts of laughter and shouts and hooting, for this horrible mob has no pity for those who implore and suffer. The crowd increased more and more, and now they indulged in hoarse cries, piercing whistles, and all kinds of horse play.

"Let a fellow see her; it's free gratis."

"Don't push so; I've paid for my place!"

"Make her stand up on something, that all may have a look."

"My corns are being ground: it was not worth coming."

"Show her properly—or return the money."

"That's fair, ain't it?"

"Give it us in the 'garden' style."

"Trot her out in all her paces! Kim up!"

Fancy the feelings of this unfortunate creature, with her delicate mind, good heart, and lofty soul, and yet with so timid and nervous a character, as she stood alone with the two policemen in the thick of the crowd, and was forced to listen to all these coarse and savage insults.

But the young sempstress did not yet understand of what crime she was accused. She soon discovered it, however, for the policeman, seizing the parcel which she had picked up, and now held in her trembling hands, said to her rudely: "What is there in that bundle?"

"Sir—it is—I am going——" The unfortunate girl hesitated—unable, in her terror, to find the word.

"If that's all you have to answer," said the policeman, "it's no great shakes. Come, make haste! turn your bundle inside out."

So saying, the policeman snatched the parcel from her, half opened it, and repeated, as he enumerated the divers articles it contained: "The devil!—sheets—a spoon and fork—a silver mug—a shawl—a blanket—you're a downy not! it was not so bad a move. Dressed like a beggar, and with silver plate about you. Oh, yes! you're a deep' un."

"Those articles do not belong to you," said the other officer.

"No, sir," replied Mother Bunch, whose strength was failing her; "but——"

"Oh, vile hunchback! you have stolen more than you are big."

"Stolen!" cried Mother Bunch, clasping her hands in horror, for she now understood it all. "Stolen!"

"The guard! make way for the sogers!" cried several persons at once.

"Oh, ho! here's the lobsters!"

"The fire-eaters!"

"The Arab devourers!"

"Come for their dromedary!"

In the midst of these noisy jests, two soldiers and a corporal advanced with much difficulty. Their bayonets and the barrels of their guns were alone visible above the heads of this hideous and compact crowd. Some officious person had been to inform the officer at the nearest guard-house, that a considerable crowd obstructed the public way.

"Come, here is the guard—so march to the guard-house!" said the policeman, taking Mother Bunch by the arm.

"Sir," said the poor girl, in a voice stifled by sobs, clasping her hands in terror, and sinking upon her knees on the pavement; "sir,—have pity—let me explain——"

"You will explain at the guard-house; so come on!"

"But, sir—I am not a thief," cried Mother Bunch, in a heart-rending tone; "have pity upon me—do not take me away like a thief, before all this crowd. Oh! mercy! mercy!"

"I tell you, there will be time to explain at the guard-house. The street is blocked up; so come along!" Grasping the unfortunate creature by both her hands, he set her, as it were, on her feet again.

At this instant, the corporal and his two soldiers, having succeeded in making their way through the crowd, approached the policeman. "Corporal," said the latter, "take this girl to the guard-house. I am an officer of the police."

"Oh, gentlemen!" cried the girl, weeping hot tears, and wringing her hands, "do not take me away, before you let me explain myself. I am not a thief—indeed, indeed, I am not a thief! I will tell you—it was to render service to others—only let me tell you——"

"I tell you, you should give your explanations at the guard-house; if you will not walk, we must drag you along," said the policeman.

We must renounce the attempt to paint this scene, at once ignoble and terrible.

Weak, overpowered, filled with alarm, the unfortunate girl was dragged along by the soldiers, her knees sinking under her at every step. The two police-officers had each to

lend an arm to support her, and mechanically she accepted their assistance. Then the vociferations and hootings burst forth with redoubled fury. Half-swooning between the two men, the hapless creature seemed to drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs.

Beneath that foggy sky, in that dirty street, under the shadow of the tall black houses, those hideous masses of people reminded one of the wildest fancies of Callot and of Goya: children in rags, drunken women, grim and blighted figures of men, rushed against each other, pushed, fought, struggled, to follow with howls and hisses an almost inanimate victim—the victim of a deplorable mistake.

Of a mistake! How one shudders to think, that such arrests may often take place, founded upon nothing but the suspicion caused by the appearance of misery, or by some inaccurate description. Can we forget the case of that young girl, who, wrongfully accused of participating in a shameful traffic, found means to escape from the persons who were leading her to prison, and, rushing up the stairs of a house, threw herself from a window, in her despair, and was crushed to death upon the paving-stones?

Meanwhile, after the abominable denunciation of which Mother Bunch was the victim, Mrs. Grivois had returned precipitately to the Rue Brise-Miche. She ascended in haste to the fourth story, opened the door of Frances Baudoin's room, and saw—Dagobert in company with his wife and the two orphans!

CHAPTER LI.

THE CONVENT.

Let us explain in a few words the presence of Dagobert. His countenance was impressed with such an air of military frankness that the manager of the coach-office would have been satisfied with his promise to return and pay the money; but the soldier had obstinately insisted on remaining in pledge, as he called it, till his wife had answered his letter. When, however, on the return of the porter, he found that the money was coming, his scruples were satisfied, and he hastened to run home.

We may imagine the stupor of Mrs. Grivois, when, upon entering the chamber, she perceived Dagobert (whom she

easily recognized by the description she had heard of him) seated beside his wife and the orphans. The anxiety of Frances at sight of Mrs. Grivois was equally striking. Rose and Blanche had told her of the visit of a lady, during her absence, upon important business; and, judging by the information received from her confessor, Frances had no doubt that this was the person charged to conduct the orphans to a religious establishment.

Her anxiety was terrible. Resolved to follow the counsels of Abbé Dubois, she dreaded lest a word from Mrs. Grivois should put Dagobert on the scent—in which case all would be lost, and the orphans would remain in their present state of ignorance and mortal sin, for which she believed herself responsible.

Dagobert, who held the hands of Rose and Blanche, left his seat as the Princess de Saint-Dizier's waiting-woman entered the room and cast an inquiring glance on Frances.

The moment was critical—nay, decisive; but Mrs. Grivois had profited by the example of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. So, taking her resolution at once, and turning to account the precipitation with which she had mounted the stairs, after the odious charge she had brought against poor Mother Bunch, and even the emotion caused by the unexpected sight of Dagobert, which gave to her features an expression of uneasiness and alarm—she exclaimed, in an agitated voice, after the moment's silence necessary to collect her thoughts: "Oh, madame! I have just been the spectator of a great misfortune. Excuse my agitation! but I am so excited——"

"Dear me! what is the matter?" said Frances, in a trembling voice, for she dreaded every moment some indiscretion on the part of Mrs. Grivois.

"I called just now," resumed the other, "to speak to you on some important business; whilst I was waiting for you, a poor young woman, rather deformed, put up sundry articles in a parcel——"

"Yes," said Frances; "it was Mother Bunch, an excellent, worthy creature."

"I thought as much, madame; well, you shall hear what has happened. As you did not come in, I resolved to pay a visit in the neighborhood. I go out, and get as far as the Rue St. Méry, when——Oh, madame!"

"Well?" said Dagobert, "what then?"

"I see a crowd—I inquire what is the matter—I learn that a policeman has just arrested a young girl as a thief, because she had been seen carrying a bundle, composed of dif-

ferent articles which did not appear to belong to her. I approached—what do I behold?—the same young woman that I had met just before in this room."

"Oh! the poor child!" exclaimed Frances, growing pale, and clasping her hands together. "What a dreadful thing!"

"Explain, then," said Dagobert to his wife. "What was in this bundle?"

"Well, my dear—to confess the truth—I was a little short, and I asked our poor friend to take some things for me to the pawnbroker's——"

"What! and they thought she had robbed us!" cried Dagobert; "she, the most honest girl in the world! it is dreadful—you ought to have interfered, madame; you ought to have said that you knew her."

"I tried to do so, sir; but, unfortunately, they would not hear me. The crowd increased every moment, till the guard came up, and carried her off."

"She might die of it, she is so sensitive and timid!" exclaimed Frances.

"Ah, good Mother Bunch! so gentle! so considerate!" said Blanche, turning with tearful eyes towards her sister.

"Not being able to help her," resumed Mrs. Grivois, "I hastened hither to inform you of this misadventure—which may, indeed, easily be repaired—as it will only be necessary to go and claim the young girl as soon as possible."

At these words, Dagobert hastily seized his hat, and said abruptly to Mrs. Grivois: "Zounds, madame! you should have begun by telling us that. Where is the poor child? Do you know?"

"I do not, sir; but there are still so many excited people in the street that, if you will have the kindness to step out, you will be sure to learn."

"Why the devil do you talk of kindness? It is my duty, madame. Poor child!" repeated Dagobert. "Taken up as a thief!—it is really horrible. I will go to the guard-house, and to the commissary of police for this neighborhood, and, by hook or crook, I will find her, and have her out, and bring her home with me."

So saying, Dagobert hastily departed. Frances, now that she felt more tranquil as to the fate of Mother Bunch, thanked the Lord that this circumstance had obliged her husband to go out, for his presence at this juncture caused her a terrible embarrassment.

Mrs. Grivois had left My Lord in the coach below, for the moments were precious. Casting a significant glance at

Frances she handed her Abbé Dubois' letter, and said to her, with strong emphasis on every word: "You will see by this letter, madame, what was the object of my visit, which I have not before been able to explain to you, but on which I truly congratulate myself, as it brings me into connection with these two charming young ladies." Rose and Blanche looked at each other in surprise. Frances took the letter with a trembling hand. It required all the pressing and threatening injunctions of her confessor to conquer the last scruples of the poor woman, for she shuddered at the thought of Dagobert's terrible indignation. Moreover, in her simplicity, she knew not how to announce to the young girls that they were to accompany this lady.

Mrs. Grivois guessed her embarrassment, made a sign to her to be at her ease, and said to Rose, whilst Frances was reading the letter of her confessor: "How happy your relation will be to see you, my dear young lady!"

"Our relation, madame?" said Rose, more and more astonished.

"Certainly. She knew of your arrival here, but, as she is still suffering from the effects of a long illness, she was not able to come herself to-day, and has sent me to fetch you to her. Unfortunately," added Mrs. Grivois, perceiving a movement of uneasiness on the part of the two sisters, "it will not be in her power, as she tells Mrs. Baudoin in her letter, to see you for more than a very short time—so you may be back here in about an hour. But to-morrow or the next day after, she will be well enough to leave home, and then she will come and make arrangements with Mrs. Baudoin and her husband, to take you into her house—for she could not bear to leave you at the charge of the worthy people who have been so kind to you."

These last words of Mrs. Grivois made a favorable impression upon the two sisters, and banished their fears of becoming a heavy burden to Dagobert's family. If it had been proposed to them to quit altogether the house in the Rue Bris-Miche, without first asking the consent of their old friend, they would certainly have hesitated; but Mrs. Grivois had only spoken of an hour's visit. They felt no suspicion, therefore, and Rose said to Frances: "We may go and see our relation, I suppose, madame, without waiting for Dagobert's return?"

"Certainly," said Frances, in a feeble voice, "since you are to be back almost directly."

"Then, madame, I would beg these dear young ladies to

come with me as soon as possible, as I should like to bring them back before noon."

"We are ready, madame," said Rose.

"Well then, young ladies, embrace your second mother, and come," said Mrs. Grivois, who was hardly able to control her uneasiness, for she trembled lest Dagobert should return from one moment to the other.

Rose and Blanche embraced Frances, who, clasping in her arms the two charming and innocent creatures that she was about to deliver up, could with difficulty restrain her tears, though she was fully convinced that she was acting for their salvation.

"Come, young ladies," said Mrs. Grivois, in the most affable tone, "let us make haste—you will excuse my impatience, I am sure—but it is in the name of your relation that I speak."

Having once more tenderly kissed the wife of Dagobert, the sisters quitted the room hand in hand, and descended the staircase close behind Mrs. Grivois, followed (without their being aware of it), by Spoil-sport. The intelligent animal cautiously watched their movements, for, in the absence of his master, he never let them out of his sight.

For greater security, no doubt, the waiting-woman of Madame de Saint-Dizier had ordered the hackney-coach to wait for her at a little distance from the Rue Brise-Miche, in the cloister square. In a few seconds, the orphans and their conductress reached the carriage.

"Oh, missus!" said the coachman, opening the door; "no offence, I hope—but you have the most ill-tempered rascal of a dog! Since you put him into my coach, he has never ceased howling like a roasted cat, and looks as if he would eat us all up alive!" In fact, My Lord, who detested solitude, was yelling in the most deplorable manner.

"Be quiet, My Lord! here I am," said Mrs. Grivois; then addressing the two sisters, she added: "Pray, get in, my dear young ladies."

Rose and Blanche got into the coach. Before she followed them, Mrs. Grivois was giving to the coachman in a low voice the direction to St. Mary's Convent, and was adding other instructions, when suddenly the pug-dog, who had growled savagely when the sisters took their seats in the coach, began to bark with fury. The cause of this anger was clear enough; Spoil-sport, until now unperceived, had with one bound entered the carriage.

The pug, exasperated by this boldness, forgetting his

ordinary prudence, and excited to the utmost by rage and ugliness of temper, sprang at his muzzle, and bit him so cruelly, that, in his turn, the brave Siberian dog, maddened by the pain, threw himself upon the teaser, seized him by the throat, and fairly strangled him with two grips of his powerful jaws—as appeared by one stifled groan of the pug, previously half suffocated with fat.

All this took place in less time than is occupied by the description. Rose and Blanche had hardly opportunity to exclaim twice: "Here, Spoil-sport! down!"

"Oh, good gracious!" said Mrs. Grivois, turning round at the noise. "There again is that monster of a dog—he will certainly hurt my love. Send him away, young ladies—make him get down—it is impossible to take him with us."

Ignorant of the degree of Spoil-sport's criminality, for his paltry foe was stretched lifeless under a seat, the young girls yet felt that it would be improper to take the dog with them, and they therefore said to him in an angry tone, at the same time slightly touching him with their feet: "Get down, Spoil-sport! go away!"

The faithful animal hesitated at first to obey this order. Sad and supplicatingly looked he at the orphans, and with an air of mild reproach, as if blaming them for sending away their only defender. But, upon the stern repetition of the command, he got down from the coach, with his tail between his legs, feeling perhaps that he had been somewhat over-hasty with regard to the pug.

Mrs. Grivois, who was in a great hurry to leave that quarter of the town, seated herself with precipitation in the carriage; the coachman closed the door, and mounted his box; and then the coach started at a rapid rate, whilst Mrs. Grivois prudently let down the blinds, for fear of meeting Dagobert by the way.

Having taken these indispensable precautions, she was able to turn her attention to her pet, whom she loved with all that deep, exaggerated affection, which people of a bad disposition sometimes entertain for animals, as if they concentrated and lavished upon them all those feelings in which they are deficient with regard to their fellow-creatures. In a word, Mrs. Grivois was passionately attached to this peevish, cowardly, spiteful dog, partly perhaps from a secret sympathy with his vices. This attachment had lasted for six years, and only seemed to increase as My Lord advanced in age.

We have laid some stress on this apparently puerile detail, because the most trifling causes have often disastrous effects, and because we wish the reader to understand what must have been the despair, fury, and exasperation of this woman, when she discovered the death of her dog—a despair, a fury, and an exasperation, of which the orphans might yet feel the cruel consequences.

The hackney-coach had proceeded rapidly for some seconds, when Mrs. Grivois, who was seated with her back to the horses, called My Lord. The dog had very good reasons for not replying.

"Well, you sulky beauty!" said Mrs. Grivois, soothingly: "you have taken offence, have you? It was not my fault if that great ugly dog came into the coach, was it, young ladies? Come and kiss your mistress, and let us make peace, old obstinate!"

The same obstinate silence continued on the part of the canine noble. Rose and Blanche began to look anxiously at each other, for they knew that Spoil-sport was somewhat rough in his ways, though they were far from suspecting what had really happened. But Mrs. Grivois, rather surprised than uneasy at her pug-dog's insensibility to her affectionate appeals, and believing him to be sullenly crouching beneath the seat, stooped down to take him up, and feeling one of his paws, drew it impatiently towards her, whilst she said to him in a half-jesting, half-angry tone: "Come, naughty fellow! you will give a pretty notion of your temper to these young ladies."

So saying, she took up the dog, much astonished at his unresisting torpor; but what was her fright, when, having placed him upon her lap, she saw that he was quite motionless.

"An apoplexy!" cried she. "The dear creature ate too much—I was always afraid of it."

Turning round hastily, she exclaimed: "Stop, coachman! stop!" without reflecting that the coachman could not hear her. Then raising the cur's head, still thinking that he was only in a fit, she perceived with horror the bloody holes imprinted by five or six sharp fangs, which left no doubt of the cause of his deplorable end.

Her first impulse was one of grief and despair. "Dead!" she exclaimed; "dead! and already cold! Oh, goodness!" —And this woman burst into tears.

The tears of the wicked are ominous. For a bad man to weep, he must have suffered much; and, with him, the

reaction of suffering, instead of softening the soul, inflames it to a dangerous anger.

Thus, after yielding to that first painful emotion, the mistress of My Lord felt herself transported with rage and hate—yes, hate—violent hate for the young girls, who had been the involuntary cause of the dog's death. Her countenance so plainly betrayed her resentment, that Blanche and Rose were frightened at the expression of her face, which had now grown purple with fury, as with agitated voice and wrathful glance she exclaimed: "It was your dog that killed him!"

"Oh, madame!" said Rose; "we had nothing to do with it."

"It was your dog that bit Spoil-sport first," added Blanche, in a plaintive voice.

The look of terror impressed on the features of the orphans recalled Mrs. Grivois to herself. She saw the fatal consequences that might arise from yielding imprudently to her anger. For the very sake of vengeance, she had to restrain herself, in order not to awaken suspicion in the minds of Marshal Simon's daughters. But not to appear to recover too soon from her first impression, she continued for some minutes to cast irritated glances at the young girls; then, little by little, her anger seemed to give way to violent grief; she covered her face with her hands, heaved a long sigh, and appeared to weep bitterly.

"Poor lady!" whispered Rose to Blanche. "How she weeps!—No doubt, she loved her dog as much as we love Spoil-sport."

"Alas! yes," replied Blanche. "We also wept when our old Jovial was killed."

After a few minutes, Mrs. Grivois raised her head, dried her eyes definitively, and said in a gentle, and almost affectionate voice: "Forgive me, young ladies! I was unable to repress the first movement of irritation, or rather of deep sorrow—for I was tenderly attached to this poor dog—he has never left me for six years."

"We are very sorry for this misfortune, madame," resumed Rose; "and we regret it the more, that it seems to be irreparable."

"I was just saying to my sister, that we can the better fancy your grief, as we have had to mourn the death of our old horse, that carried us all the way from Siberia."

"Well, my dear young ladies, let us think no more about it. It was my fault; I should not have brought him with

me; but he was always so miserable, whenever I left him. You will make allowance for my weakness. A good heart feels for animals as well as people; so I must trust to your sensibility to excuse my hastiness."

"Do not think of it, madame; it is only your grief that afflicts us."

"I shall get over it, my dear young ladies—I shall get over it. The joy of the meeting between you and your relation will help to console me. She will be so happy. You are so charming! and then the singular circumstance of your exact likeness to each other adds to the interest you inspire."

"You are too kind to us, madame."

"Oh, no—I am sure you resemble each other as much in disposition as in face."

"That is quite natural, madame," said Rose, "for since our birth we have never left each other a minute, whether by night or day. It would be strange, if we were not like in character."

"Really, my dear young ladies! you have never left each other a minute?"

"Never, madame." The sisters joined hands with an expressive smile.

"Then, how unhappy you would be, and how much to be pitied, if ever you were separated."

"Oh, madame! it is impossible," said Blanche, smiling.

"How impossible?"

"Who would have the heart to separate us?"

"No doubt, my dear young ladies, it would be very cruel."

"Oh, madame," resumed Blanche, "even very wicked people would not think of separating us."

"So much the better, my dear young ladies—pray, why?"

"Because it would cause us too much grief."

"Because it would kill us."

"Poor little dears!"

"Three months ago, we were shut up in prison. Well, when the governor of the prison saw us, though he looked a very stern man, he could not help saying: "It would be killing these children to separate them;" and so we remained together, and were as happy as one can be in prison."

"It shows your excellent heart, and also that of the persons who knew how to appreciate it."

The carriage stopped, and they heard the coachman call out: "Any one at the gate there?"

"Oh! here we are at your relation's," said Mrs. Grivois.

Two wings of a gate flew open, and the carriage rolled over the gravel of a court-yard.

Mrs. Grivois having drawn up one of the blinds, they found themselves in a vast court, across the centre of which ran a high wall, with a kind of porch upon columns, under which was a little door. Behind this wall, they could see the upper part of a very large building in freestone. Compared with the house in the Rue Brise-Miche, this building appeared a palace; so Blanche said to Mrs. Grivois, with an expression of artless admiration: "Dear me, madame, what a fine residence!"

"That is nothing," replied Madame Grivois; "wait till you see the interior, which is much finer."

When the coachman opened the door of the carriage, what was the rage of Mrs. Grivois, and the surprise of the girls, to see Spoil-sport, who had been clever enough to follow the coach. Pricking up his ears, and wagging his tail, he seemed to have forgotten his late offences, and to expect to be praised for his intelligent fidelity.

"What!" cried Mrs Grivois, whose sorrows were renewed at the sight; "has that abominable dog followed the coach?"

"A famous dog, mum," answered the coachman "he never once left the heels of my horses. He must have been trained to it. He's a powerful beast, and two men couldn't scare him. Look at the throat of him now!"

The mistress of the deceased pug, enraged at the somewhat unseasonable praises bestowed upon the Siberian, said to the orphans, "I will announce your arrival, wait for me an instant in the coach."

So saying, she went with a rapid step towards the porch, and rang the bell. A woman, clad in a monastic garb, appeared at the door, and bowed respectfully to Mrs. Grivois, who addressed her in these few words "I have brought you the two young girls; the orders of Abbé d'Aigrigny and the princess are, that they be instantly separated, and kept apart in solitary cells—you understand, sister—and subjected to the rule for *impenitents*."

"I will go and inform the superior, and it will be done," said the portress, with another bend.

"Now, will you come, my dear young ladies?" resumed Mrs. Grivois, addressing the two girls, who had secretly bestowed a few caresses upon Spoil-sport, so deeply were they touched by his instinctive attachment; "you will be introduced to your relation, and I will return and fetch you in half an hour. Coachman keep that dog back."

Rose and Blanche, in getting out of the coach, were so much occupied with Spoil-sport, that they did not perceive the portress, who was half hidden behind the little door. Neither did they remark, that the person who was to introduce them was dressed as a nun, till, taking them by the hand, she had led them across the threshold, when the door was immediately closed behind them.

As soon as Mrs. Grivois had seen the orphans safe into the convent, she told the coachman to leave the court-yard, and wait for her at the outer-gate. The coachman obeyed; but Spoil-sport, who had seen Rose and Blanche enter by the little door, ran to it, and remained there.

Mrs. Grivois then called the porter of the main entrance, a tall, vigorous fellow and said to him: "Here are ten francs for you, Nicholas, if you will beat out the brains of that great dog, who is crouching under the porch."

Nicholas shook his head, as he observed Spoil-sport's size and strength. "Devil take me, madame!" said he; "'tis not so easy to tackle a dog of that build."

"I will give you twenty francs; only kill him before me."

"One ought to have a gun, and I have only an iron hammer."

"That will do; you can knock him down at a blow."

"Well, madame—I will try—but I have my doubts." And Nicholas went to fetch his mallet.

"Oh! if I had the strength!" said Mrs. Grivois.

The porter returned with his weapon, and advanced slowly and treacherously towards Spoilsport, who was still crouching beneath the porch. "Here, old fellow! here, my good dog!" said Nicholas, striking his left hand on his thigh, and keeping his right behind him, with the crowbar grasped in it.

Spoil-sport rose, examined Nicholas attentively, and no doubt perceiving by his manner that the porter meditated some evil design, bounded away from him, outflanked the enemy, saw clearly what was intended, and kept himself at a respectful distance.

"He smells a rat," said Nicholas; "the rascal's on his guard. He will not let me come near him. It's no go."

"You are an awkward fellow," said Mrs. Grivois in a passion, as she threw a five-franc piece to Nicholas: "at all events, drive him away."

"That will be easier than to kill him, madame," said the porter. Indeed, finding himself pursued, and conscious probably that it would be useless to attempt an open resist-

ance, Spoil-sport fled from the court-yard into the street; but once there, he felt himself, as it were, upon neutral ground, and notwithstanding all the threats of Nicholas, refused to withdraw an inch further than just sufficient to keep out of reach of the sledge-hammer. So that when Mrs. Grivois, pale with rage, again stepped into her hackney-coach, in which were My Lord's lifeless remains, she saw with the utmost vexation that Spoil-sport was lying at a few steps from the gate, which Nicholas had just closed, having given up the chase in despair.

The Siberian dog, sure of finding his way back to the Rue Brise-Miche, had determined, with the sagacity peculiar to his race, to wait for the orphans on the spot where he then was.

Thus were the two sisters confined in St. Mary's Convent, which, as we have already said, was next door to the lunatic asylum in which Adrienne de Cardoville was immured.

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We now conduct the reader to the dwelling of Dagobert's wife, who was waiting with dreadful anxiety for the return of her husband, knowing that he would call her to account for the disappearance of Marshal Simon's daughters.

CHAPTER LII.

THE INFLUENCE OF A CONFESSOR.

Hardly had the orphans quitted Dagobert's wife, when the poor woman, kneeling down, began to pray with fervor. Her tears, long restrained, now flowed abundantly; notwithstanding her sincere conviction that she had performed a religious duty in delivering up the girls, she waited with extreme fear her husband's return. Though blinded by her pious zeal, she could not hide from herself, that Dagobert would have good reason to be angry; and then this poor mother had also, under these untoward circumstances, to tell him of Agricola's arrest.

Every noise upon the stairs made Frances start with trembling anxiety; after which, she would resume her fervent prayers, supplicating strength to support this new and arduous trial. At length, she heard a step upon the landing-place below, and, feeling sure this time that it was Dagobert,

she hastily seated herself, dried her tears, and taking a sack of coarse cloth upon her lap, appeared to be occupied with sewing—though her aged hands trembled so much, that she could hardly hold the needle.

After some minutes the door opened, and Dagobert appeared. The soldier's rough countenance was stern and sad; as he entered, he flung his hat violently upon the table, so full of painful thought, that he did not at first perceive the absence of the orphans.

"Poor girl!" cried he. "It is really terrible!"

"Didst see Mother Bunch? didst claim her?" said Frances hastily, forgetting for a moment her own fears.

"Yes, I have seen her—but in what a state!—'twas enough to break one's heart. I claimed her, and pretty loud too, I can tell you; but they said to me, that the commissary must first come to our place in order——" here Dagobert paused, threw a glance of surprise round the room, and exclaimed abruptly: "Where are the children?"

Frances felt herself seized with an icy shudder. "My dear," she began in a feeble voice—but she was unable to continue.

"Where are Rose and Blanche! Answer me then! And Spoil-sport, who is not here either!"

"Do not be angry."

"Come," said Dagobert, abruptly, "I see you have let them go out with a neighbor—why not have accompanied them yourself, or let them wait for me, if they wished to take a walk; which is natural enough, this room being so dull. But I am astonished that they should have gone out before they had news of good Mother Bunch—they have such kind hearts. But how pale you are?" added the soldier, looking nearer at Frances; "what is the matter, my poor wife? Are you ill?"

Dagobert took Frances's hand affectionately in his own; but the latter, painfully agitated by these words, pronounced with touching goodness, bowed her head and wept as she kissed her husband's hand. The soldier, growing more and more uneasy as he felt the scalding tears of his wife, exclaimed: "You weep, you do not answer—tell me, then, the cause of your grief, poor wife! Is it because I spoke a little loud, in asking you how you could let the dear children go out with a neighbor? Remember their dying mother entrusted them to my care—'tis sacred, you see—and with them, I am like an old hen after her chickens," added he, laughing to enliven Frances.

"Yes, you are right in loving them!"

"Come, then—be calm—you know me of old. With my great, hoarse voice, I am not so bad a fellow at bottom. As you can trust to this neighbor, there is no great harm done; but, in future, my good Frances, do not take any step with regard to the children without consulting me. They asked, I suppose, to go out for a little stroll with Spoil-sport?"

"No, my dear——I——"

"No! Who is this neighbor, to whom you have entrusted them? Where has she taken them? What time will she bring them back?"

"I do not know," murmured Frances, in a failing voice.

"You do not know!" cried Dagobert, with indignation; but restraining himself, he added, in a tone of friendly reproach: "You do not know? You cannot even fix an hour, or, better still, not entrust them to any one? The children must have been very anxious to go out. They knew that I should return at any moment, so why not wait for me—eh, Frances? I ask you, why did they not wait for me? Answer me, will you!—Zounds! you would make a saint swear!" cried Dagobert, stamping his foot; "answer me, I say!"

The courage of Frances was fast failing. These pressing and reiterated questions, which might end by the discovery of the truth, made her endure a thousand slow and poignant tortures. She preferred coming at once to the point, and determined to bear the full weight of her husband's anger, like a humble and resigned victim, obstinately faithful to the promise she had sworn to her confessor.

Not having the strength to rise, she bowed her head, allowed her arms to fall on either side of the chair, and said to her husband in a tone of the deepest despondency: "Do with me what you will—but do not ask what is become of the children—I cannot answer you."

If a thunderbolt had fallen at the feet of the soldier, he would not have been more violently, more deeply moved; he became deadly pale; his bald forehead was covered with cold sweat; with fixed and staring look, he remained for some moments motionless, mute, and petrified. Then, as if roused with a start from this momentary torpor, and filled with a terrific energy, he seized his wife by the shoulders, lifted her like a feather, placed her on her feet before him, and, leaning over her, exclaimed in a tone of mingled fury and despair: "The children!"

"Mercy! mercy!" gasped Frances, in a faint voice.

"Where are the children?" repeated Dagobert, as he shook with his powerful hands that poor frail body, and added in a voice of thunder: "Will you answer? the children!"

"Kill me, or forgive me, I cannot answer you," replied the unhappy woman, with that inflexible, yet mild obstinacy, peculiar to timid characters, when they act from convictions of doing right.

"Wretch!" cried the soldier; wild with rage, grief, despair, he lifted up his wife as if he would have dashed her upon the floor—but he was too brave a man to commit such cowardly cruelty, and, after that first burst of involuntary fury, he let her go.

Overpowered, Frances sank upon her knees, clasped her hands, and, by the faint motion of her lips, it was clear that she was praying. Dagobert had then a moment of stunning giddiness; his thoughts wandered; what had just happened was so sudden, so incomprehensible that it required some minutes to convince himself that his wife (that angel of goodness, whose life had been one course of heroic self-devotion, and who knew what the daughters of Marshal Simon were to him) should say to him: "Do not ask me about them—I cannot answer you."

The firmest, the strongest mind would have been shaken by this inexplicable fact. But, when the soldier had a little recovered himself, he began to look coolly at the circumstances, and reasoned thus sensibly with himself: "My wife alone can explain to me this inconceivable mystery—I do not mean either to beat or kill her—let us try every possible method, therefore, to induce her to speak, and above all, let me try to control myself."

He took a chair, handed another to his wife, who was still on her knees, and said to her: "Sit down." With an air of the utmost dejection, Frances obeyed.

"Listen to me, wife," resumed Dagobert in a broken voice, interrupted by involuntary starts, which betrayed the boiling impatience he could hardly restrain. "Understand me—this cannot pass over in this manner—you know. I will never use violence towards you—just now, I gave way to a first moment of hastiness—I am sorry for it. Be sure, I shall not do so again: but, after all, I must know what has become of these children. Their mother entrusted them to my care, and I did not bring them all the way from Siberia, for you to say to me: 'Do not ask me—I cannot tell you what I have done with them.' There is no reason in that,

Suppose Marshal Simon were to arrive, and say to me, 'Dagobert, my children?' what answer am I to give him? See, I am calm—judge for yourself—I am calm—but just put yourself in my place, and tell me—what answer am I to give to the marshal? Well—what say you! Will you speak!"

"Alas! my dear——"

"It is of no use crying *alas!*" said the soldier wiping his forehead, on which the veins were swollen as if they would burst; "what am I to answer to the marshal?"

"Accuse me to him—I will bear it all—I will say——"

"What will you say?"

"That, on going out, you entrusted the two girls to me, and that not finding them on return you asked me about them—and that my answer was, that I could not tell you what had become of them."

"And you think the marshal will be satisfied with such reasons?" cried Dagobert, clinching his fists convulsively upon his knees.

"Unfortunately, I can give no other—either to him or you—no—not if I were to die for it."

Dagobert bounded from his chair at this answer, which was given with hopeless resignation. His patience was exhausted; but determined not to yield to new bursts of anger, or to spend his breath in useless menaces, he abruptly opened one of the windows, and exposed his burning forehead to the cool air. A little calmer, he walked up and down for a few moments, and then returned to seat himself beside his wife. She, with her eyes bathed in tears, fixed her gaze upon the crucifix, thinking that she also had to bear a heavy cross.

Dagobert resumed: "By the manner in which you speak, I see that no accident has happened, which might endanger the health of the children."

"No, oh no! thank God, they are quite well—that is all I can say to you."

"Did they go out alone?"

"I cannot answer you."

"Has any one taken them away?"

"Alas, my dear! why ask me these questions? I cannot answer you."

"Will they come back here?"

"I do not know."

Dagobert started up; his patience was once more exhausted. But, after taking a few turns in the room, he again seated himself as before.

"After all," said he to his wife, "you have no interest to conceal from me what is become of the children. Why refuse to let me know?"

"I cannot do otherwise."

"I think you will change your opinion, when you know something that I am now forced to tell you. Listen to me well!" added Dagobert, in an agitated voice; "if these children are not restored to me before the 13th of February—a day close at hand—I am in the position of a man that would rob the daughters of Marshal Simon—rob them, d'ye understand?" said the soldier, becoming more and more agitated. Then, with an accent of despair which pierced Frances's heart, he continued: "And yet I have done all that an honest man could do for those poor children—you cannot tell what I have had to suffer on the road—my cares, my anxieties—I, a soldier, with the charge of two girls. It was only by strength of heart, by devotion, that I could go through with it—and when, for my reward, I hoped to be able to say to their father: 'Here are your children!——' The soldier paused. To the violence of his first emotions had succeeded a mournful tenderness; he wept.

At sight of the tears rolling slowly down Dagobert's gray moustache, Frances felt for a moment her resolution give way; but, recalling the oath which she had made to her confessor, and reflecting that the eternal salvation of the orphans was at stake, she reproached herself inwardly with this evil temptation, which would no doubt be severely blamed by Abbé Dubois. She answered, therefore, in a trembling voice: "How can they accuse you of robbing these children?"

"Know," resumed Dagobert, drawing his hand across his eyes, "that if these young girls have braved so many dangers, to come hither, all the way from Siberia, it is that great interests are concerned—perhaps an immense fortune—and that, if they are not present on the 13th February—here, in Paris, Rue Saint François—all will be lost—and through my fault—for I am responsible for your actions."

"The 13th February? Rue Saint François?" cried Frances, looking at her husband with surprise. "Like Gabriel!"

"What do you say about Gabriel?"

"When I took him in (poor deserted child!), he wore a bronze medal about his neck."

"A bronze medal!" cried the soldier, struck with amazement; "a bronze medal with these words, 'At Paris you you will be, the 13th of February, 1832, Rue Saint François?"

"Yes—how do you know?"'

"Gabriel, too!" said the soldier speaking to himself. Then he added hastily: "Does Gabriel know that this medal was found upon him?"

"I spoke to him of it at some time. He had also about him a portfolio, filled with papers in a foreign tongue. I gave them to Abbé Dubois, my confessor, to look over. He told me afterwards, that they were of little consequence; and, at a later period, when a charitable person named M. Rodin, undertook the education of Gabriel, and to get him into the seminary, Abbé Dubois handed both papers and medal to him. Since then, I have heard nothing of them."

When Frances spoke of her confessor, a sudden light flashed across the mind of the soldier, though he was far from suspecting the machinations which had so long been at work with regard to Gabriel and the orphans. But he had a vague feeling that his wife was acting in obedience to some secret influence of the confessional—an influence of which he could not understand the aim or object, but which explained, in part at least, Frances's inconceivable obstinacy with regard to the disappearance of the orphans.

After a moment's reflection, he rose, and said sternly to his wife, looking fixedly at her: "There is a priest at the bottom of all this."

"What do you mean, my dear?"

"You have no interest to conceal these children. You are one of the best of women. You see that I suffer; if you only were concerned, you would have pity upon me."

"My dear——"

"I tell you, all this smacks of the confessional," resumed Dagobert. "You would sacrifice me and these children to your confessor; but take care—I shall find out where he lives—and a thousand thunders! I will go and ask him who is master in my house, he or I—and if he does not answer," added the soldier, with a threatening expression of countenance, "I shall know how to make him speak."

"Gracious heaven!" cried Frances, clasping her hands in horror at these sacrilegious words; "remember he is a priest!"

"A priest, who causes discord, treachery, and misfortune in my house, is as much of a wretch as any other, whom I have a right to call to account for the evil he does to me and mine. Therefore, tell me immediately where are the children—or else, I give you fair warning, I will go and demand them of the confessor. Some crime is here hatch-

ing, of which you are an accomplice without knowing it, unhappy woman! Well, I prefer having to do with another than you."

"My dear," said Frances, in a mild, firm voice, "you cannot think to impose by violence on a venerable man, who for twenty years has had the care of my soul. His age alone should be respected."

"No age shall prevent me!"

"Heavens! where are you going? You alarm me!"

"I am going to your church. They must know you there—I will ask for your confessor—and we shall see!"

"I entreat you, my dear," cried Frances, throwing herself in a fright before Dagobert, who was hastening towards the door; "only think, to what you will expose yourself! Heavens! insult a priest? Why, it is one of the reserved cases!"

These last words, which appeared most alarming to the simplicity of Dagobert's wife, did not make any impression upon the soldier. He disengaged himself from her grasp, and was going to rush out bareheaded, so high was his exasperation, when the door opened, and the commissary of police entered, followed by Mother Bunch and a policeman, carrying the bundle which he had taken from the young girl.

"The commissary!" cried Dagobert, who recognized him by his official scarf. "Ah! so much the better—he could not have come at a fitter moment."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE EXAMINATION.

"MISTRESS FRANCES BAUDOIN?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes, sir—it is I," said Frances. Then, perceiving the pale and trembling sewing-girl, who did not dare to come forward, she stretched out her arms to her. "Oh, my poor child!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears; "forgive—forgive us—since it is for our sake you have suffered this humiliation!"

When Dagobert's wife had tenderly embraced the young sempstress, the latter, turning towards the commissary, said to him with an expression of sad and touching dignity: "You see, sir, that I am not a thief."

"Madame," said the magistrate, addressing Frances, "am I to understand that the silver mug, the shawl, the sheets contained in this bundle——"

"Belong to me, sir. It was to render me a service that this dear girl, who is the best and most honest creature in the world, undertook to carry these articles to the pawnbroker's."

"Sir," said the magistrate sternly to the policeman, "you have committed a deplorable error. I shall take care to report you, and see that you are punished. You may go, sir." Then, addressing Mother Bunch, with an air of real regret, he added: "I can only express my sorrow for what has happened. Believe me, I deeply feel for the cruel position in which you have been placed."

"I believe it, sir," said Mother Bunch, "and I thank you." Overcome by so many emotions, she sank upon a chair.

The magistrate was about to retire, when Dagobert, who had been seriously reflecting for some minutes, said to him in a firm voice: "Please to hear me, sir; I have a deposition to make."

"Speak, sir."

"What I am about to say is very important; it is to you, in your quality of a magistrate, that I make this declaration."

"And as a magistrate I will hear you, sir."

"I arrived here two days ago, bringing with me from Russia two girls who had been entrusted to me by their mother—the wife of Marshal Simon."

"Of Marshal Simon, Duke de Ligny?" said the commissary, very much surprised.

"Yes, sir. Well, I left them here, being obliged to go out on pressing business. This morning, during my absence, they disappeared—and I am certain I know the man who has been the cause of it."

"Now, my dear," said Frances, much alarmed.

"Sir," said the magistrate, "your declaration is a very serious one. Disappearance of persons—sequestration, perhaps. But are you quite sure?"

"These young ladies were here an hour ago; I repeat, sir, that during my absence, they have been taken away."

"I do not doubt the sincerity of your declaration, sir; but still it is difficult to explain so strange an abduction. Who tells you that these young girls will not return? Besides, whom do you suspect? One word, before you make your accusation. Remember, it is the magistrate who hears

you. On leaving this place, the law will take its course in this affair."

"That is what I wish, sir; I am responsible for those young ladies to their father. He may arrive at any moment, and I must be prepared to justify myself."

"I understand all these reasons, sir; but still have a care you are not deceived by unfounded suspicions. Your denunciation once made, I may have to act provisionally against the person accused. Now, if you should be under a mistake, the consequences would be very serious for you; and, without going further," said the magistrate, pointing to Mother Bunch, with emotion, "you see what are the results of a false accusation."

"You hear, my dear," cried Frances, terrified at the resolution of Dagobert to accuse Abbé Dubois; "do not say a word more, I entreat you."

But the more the soldier reflected, the more he felt convinced that nothing but the influence of her confessor could have induced Frances to act as she had done; so he resumed, with assurance: "I accuse my wife's confessor of being the principal or the accomplice in the abduction of Marshal Simon's daughters."

Frances uttered a deep groan, and hid her face in her hands; while Mother Bunch, who had drawn nigh, endeavored to console her. The magistrate had listened to Dagobert with extreme astonishment, and he now said to him with some severity: "Pray, sir, do not accuse unjustly a man whose position is in the highest degree respectable—a priest, sir?—yes, a priest? I warned you beforehand to reflect upon what you advanced. All this becomes very serious, and, at your age, any levity in such matters would be unpardonable."

"Bless me, sir!" said Dagobert, with impatience; "at my age, one has common sense. These are the facts. My wife is one of the best and most honorable of human creatures—ask any one in the neighborhood, and they will tell you so—but she is a devotee; and, for twenty years, she has always seen with her confessor's eyes. She adores her son, she loves me also; but she puts the confessor before us both."

"Sir," said the commissary, "these family details——"

"Are indispensable, as you shall see. I go out an hour ago, to look after this poor girl here. When I come back, the young ladies have disappeared. I ask my wife to whom she has entrusted them, and where they are; she falls at my feet

weeping, and says: 'Do what you will with me, but do not ask me what has become of the children. I cannot answer you.'"

"Is this true, madame?" cried the commissary, looking at Frances with surprise.

"Anger, threats, entreaties, had no effect," resumed Dagobert; "to everything she answered as mildly as a saint: 'I can tell you nothing!' Now, sir, I maintain that my wife has no interest to take away these children; she is under the absolute dominion of her confessor; she has acted by his orders and for his purposes; he is the guilty party."

Whilst Dagobert spoke, the commissary looked more and more attentively at Frances, who, supported by the hunchback, continued to weep bitterly. After a moment's reflection, the magistrate advanced towards Dagobert's wife, and said to her: "Madame, you have heard what your husband has just declared."

"Yes, sir."

"What have you to say in your justification?"

"But, sir," cried Dagobert, "it is not my wife that I accuse—I do not mean that; it is her confessor."

"Sir, you have applied to a magistrate; and the magistrate must act as he thinks best for the discovery of the truth. Once more, madame," he resumed, addressing Frances, "what have you to say in your justification?"

"Alas! nothing, sir."

"Is it true that your husband left these young girls in your charge when he went out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it true that, on his return, they were no longer to be found?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it true that, when he asked you where they were, you told him that you could give him no information on the subject?"

The commissary appeared to wait for Frances' reply with a kind of anxious curiosity.

"Yes, sir," said she, with the utmost simplicity, "that was the answer I made my husband."

"What, madame!" said the magistrate, with an air of painful astonishment; "that was your only answer to all the prayers and commands of your husband? What! you refused to give him the least information? It is neither probable nor possible."

"It is the truth, sir."

"Well, but, after all, madame, what have you done with the young ladies that were entrusted to your care?"

"I can tell you nothing about it, sir. If I would not answer my poor husband, I certainly will not answer any one else."

"Well, sir," resumed Dagobert, "was I wrong? An honest, excellent woman like that, who was always full of good sense and affection, to talk in this way—is it natural? I repeat to you, sir, that it is the work of her confessor; act against him promptly and decidedly, we shall soon know all, and my poor children will be restored to me."

"Madame," continued the commissary, without being able to repress a certain degree of emotion, "I am about to speak to you very severely. My duty obliges me to do so. This affair becomes so serious and complicated, that I must instantly commence judicial proceedings on the subject. You acknowledge that these young ladies have been left in your charge, and that you cannot produce them. Now, listen to me: if you refuse to give any explanation in the matter, it is you alone that will be accused of their disappearance. I shall be obliged, though with great regret, to take you into custody."

"Me!" cried Frances, with the utmost alarm.

"Her!" exclaimed Dagobert; "never! It is her confessor that I accuse, not my poor wife. Take her into custody, indeed!" He ran towards her, as if he would protect her.

"It is too late, sir," said the commissary. "You have made your charge for the abduction of these two young ladies. According to your wife's own declaration, she alone is compromised up to this point. I must take her before the Public Prosecutor, who will decide what course to pursue."

"And I say, sir," cried Dagobert, in a menacing tone, "that my wife shall not stir from this room."

"Sir," said the commissary coolly, "I can appreciate you feelings; but, in the interest of justice, I would beg you not to oppose a necessary measure—a measure which, moreover, in ten minutes it would be quite impossible for you to prevent."

These words, spoken with calmness, recalled the soldier to himself. "But, sir," said he, "I do not accuse my wife."

"Never mind, my dear—do not think of me!" said Frances, with the angelic resignation of a martyr. "The Lord is still pleased to try me sorely; but I am his unworthy servant, and must gratefully resign myself to His will. Let them arrest me, if they choose; I will say no more in prison than I have said already on the subject of those poor children."

"But, sir," cried Dagobert, "you see that my wife is out of her head. You cannot arrest her."

"There is no charge, proof, or indication against the other person whom you accuse, and whose character should be his protection. If I take your wife, she may perhaps be restored to you after a preliminary examination. I regret," added the commissary, in a tone of pity, "to have to execute such a mission, at the very moment when your son's arrest——"

"What!" cried Dagobert, looking with speechless astonishment at his wife and Mother Bunch; "what does he say? my son?"

"You were not then aware of it? Oh, sir, a thousand pardons!" said the magistrate, with painful emotion. "It is distressing to make you such a communication."

"My son!" repeated Dagobert, pressing his two hands to his forehead. "My son! arrested!"

"For a political offence of no great moment," said the commissary.

"Oh! this is too much. All comes on me at once!" cried the soldier, falling overpowered into a chair, and hiding his face with his hands.

* * * * * * *

After a touching farewell, during which, in spite of her terror, Frances remained faithful to the vow she had made to the Abbé Dubois—Dagobert, who had refused to give evidence against his wife, was left leaning upon a table, exhausted by contending emotions, and could not help explaining: "Yesterday, I had with me my wife, my son, my two poor orphans—and now—I am alone—alone!"

The moment he pronounced these words, in a despairing tone, a mild sad voice was heard close behind him, saying timidly: "M. Dagobert, I am here; if you will allow me, I will remain and wait upon you."

It was Mother Bunch!

Trusting that the reader's sympathy is with the old soldier thus left desolate, with Agricola in his prison, Adrienne in hers, the madhouse, and Rose and Blanche Simon in theirs, the nunnery; we hasten to assure him (or her, as the case may be), that not only will their future steps be traced, but the dark machinations of the Jesuits, and the thrilling scenes in which new characters will perform their varied parts, pervaded by the watching spirit of the Wandering Jew, will be revealed in Part Second of this work, entitled: THE CHASTISEMENT.

PART SECOND.—The Chastisement.

PROLOGUE.

THE BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF TWO WORLDS.

As the eagle, perched upon the cliff, commands an all-comprehensive view—not only of what happens on the plains and in the woodlands, but of matters occurring upon the heights, which its aerie overlooks, so may the reader have sights pointed out to him, which lie below the level of the unassisted eye.

In the year 1831, the powerful Order of the Jesuits saw fit to begin to act upon information which had for some time been digesting in their hands.

As it related to a sum estimated at no less than thirty or forty millions of francs, it is no wonder that they should redouble all exertions to obtain it from the rightful owners.

These were, presumably, the descendants of Marius, Count of Rennepont, in the reign of Louis XIV. of France.

They were distinguished from other men by a simple token, which all, in the year above named, had in their hands.

It was a bronze medal, bearing these legends on reverse and obverse:

Victim of L. C. D. J. Pray for me! ——— Paris, February the 13th, 1682.	In Paris, Rue St. François, No. 3, In a century and a half you will be. February the 13th, 1832. ——— Pray for me!

Those who had this token were descendants of a family whom, a hundred and fifty years ago, persecution scattered through the world, in emigration and exile; in changes of religion, fortune and name. For this family—what grandeur, what reverses, what obscurity, what lustre, what penury, what glory! How many crimes sullied, how many virtues honored it! The history of this single family is the

history of humanity! Passing through many generations, throbbing in the veins of the poor and the rich, the sovereign and the bandit, the wise and the simple, the coward and the brave, the saint and the atheist, the blood flowed on to the year we have named.

Seven representatives summed up the virtue, courage, degradation, splendor, and poverty of the race. Seven: two orphan twin daughters of exiled parents, a dethroned prince, a humble missionary priest, a man of the middle class, a young lady of high name and large fortune, and a working man.

Fate scattered them in Russia, India, France, and America.

The orphans, Rose and Blanche Simon, had left their dead mother's grave in Siberia, under charge of a trooper named Francis Baudoin, *alias* Dagobert, who was as much attached to them as he had been devoted to their father, his commanding general.

On the road to France, this little party had met the first check, in the only tavern of Mockern village. Not only had a wild beast showman, known as Morok the lion-tamer, sought to pick a quarrel with the inoffensive veteran, but that failing, had let a panther of his menagerie loose upon the soldier's horse. That horse had carried Dagobert, under General Simon's and the Great Napoleon's eyes, through many battles; had borne the General's wife (a Polish lady under the Czar's ban) to her home of exile in Siberia, and their children now across Russia and Germany, but only to perish thus cruelly. An unseen hand appeared in a manifestation of spite otherwise unaccountable. Dagobert, denounced as a French spy, and his fair young companions accused of being adventuresses to help his designs, had so kindled at the insult, not less to him than to his old commander's daughters, that he had taught the pompous burgomaster of Mockern a lesson, which, however, resulted in the imprisonment of the three in Leipsic jail.

General Simon, who had vainly sought to share his master's St. Helena captivity, had gone to fight the English in India. But notwithstanding his drilling of Radja-sing's sepoys, they had been beaten by the troops taught by Clive, and not only was the old king of Mundi slain, and the realm added to the Company's lands, but his son, Prince Djalma, taken prisoner. However, at length released, he had gone to Batavia, with General Simon. The prince's mother was a Frenchwoman, and among the property she left him in the capital of Java, the general was delighted to find just such another medal as he knew was in his wife's possession.

The unseen hand of enmity had reached to him, for letters miscarried, and he did not know either his wife's decease or that he had twin daughters.

By a trick, on the eve of the steamship leaving Batavia for the Isthmus of Suez, Djalma was separated from his friend, and sailing for Europe alone, the latter had to follow in another vessel.

The missionary priest trod the war trails of the wilderness, with that faith and fearlessness which true soldiers of the cross should evince. In one of these heroic undertakings, Indians had captured him, and dragging him to their village under the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, they had nailed him in derision to a cross, and prepared to scalp him.

But if an unseen hand of a foe smote or stabbed at the sons of Rennepont, a visible interpositor had often shielded them, in various parts of the globe.

A man, seeming of thirty years of age, very tall, with a countenance as lofty as mournful, marked by the black eyebrows meeting, had thrown himself—during a battle's height—between a gun of a park which General Simon was charging and that officer. The cannon vomited its hail of death, but when the flame and smoke had passed, the tall man stood erect as before, smiling pityingly on the gunner, who fell on his knees as frightened as if he beheld Satan himself. Again, as General Simon lay upon the lost field of Waterloo, raging with his wounds, eager to die after such a defeat, this same man staunched his hurts, and bade him live for his wife's sake.

Years after, wearing the same unalterable look, this man accosted Dagobert in Siberia, and gave him for General Simon's wife, the diary and letters of her husband, written in India, in little hope of them ever reaching her hands. And at the year our story opens, this man unbarred the cell-door of Leipsic jail, and let Dagobert and the orphans out, free to continue their way into France.

On the other hand, when the scalping-knife had traced its mark around the head of Gabriel the missionary, and when only the dexterous turn and tug would have removed the trophy, a sudden apparition had terrified the superstitious savages. It was a woman of thirty, whose brown tresses formed a rich frame around a royal face, toned down by endless sorrowing. The red-skins shrank from her steady advance, and when her hand was stretched out between them and their young victim, they uttered a howl of alarm, and fled as if a host of their foemen were on their track.

Gabriel was saved, but all his life he was doomed to bear that halo of martyrdom, the circling sweep of the scalper's knife.

He was a Jesuit. By the orders of his society he embarked for Europe. We should say here, that he, though owning a medal of the seven described, was unaware that he should have worn it. His vessel was driven by storms to refit at the Azores, where he had changed ship into the same as was bearing Prince Djalma to France, *via* Portsmouth.

But the gales followed him, and sated their fury by wrecking the "Black Eagle" on the Picardy coast. This was at the same point as were a disabled Hamburg steamer, among whose passengers where Dagobert and his two charges, was destroyed the same night. Happily the tempest did not annihilate them all. There were saved, Prince Djalma and a countryman of his, one Faringhea, a Thuggee chief, hunted out of British India; Dagobert, and Rose and Blanche Simon, whom Gabriel had rescued. These survivors had recovered, thanks to the care they had received in Cardoville House, a country mansion which had sheltered them, and except the prince and the Strangler chief, the others were speedily able to go on to Paris.

The old grenadier and the orphans—until General Simon should be heard from—dwelt in the former's house. His son had kept it, from his mother's love for the life-long home. It was such a mean habitation as a workman like Agricola Baudoin could afford to pay the rent of, and far from the fit abode of the daughters of the Duke de Ligny and Marshal of France, which Napoleon had created General Simon, though the rank had only recently been approved by the restoration.

But in Paris the unknown hostile hand showed itself more malignant than ever.

The young lady of high name and large fortune was Adrienne de Cardoville, whose aunt, the Princess de Saint-Dizier, was a Jesuit. Through her and her accomplices' machinations, the young lady's forward yet virtuous, wildly aspiring but sensible, romantic but just, character was twisted into a passable reason for her immurement in a mad-house.

This asylum adjoined St. Mary's Convent, into which Rose and Blanche Simon were deceitfully conducted. To secure their removal, Dagobert had been decoyed into the country, under pretence of showing some of General Simon's documents to a lawyer; his son Agricola arrested for treason,

on account of some idle verses the blacksmith poet was guilty of, and his wife rendered powerless, or, rather, a passive assistant, by the influence of the confessional! When Dagobert hurried back from his wild-goose chase, he found the orphans gone: Mother Bunch (a fellow-tenant of the house, who had been brought up in the family) ignorant, and his wife stubbornly refusing to break the promise she had given her confessor, and acquaint a single soul where she had permitted the girls to be taken. In his rage, the soldier rashly accused that confessor, but instead of arresting the Abbé Dubois, it was Mrs. Baudoin whom the magistrate felt compelled to arrest, as the person whom alone he ventured to commit for examination in regard to the orphans' disappearance. Thus triumphs, for the time being, the unseen foe.

The orphans in a nunnery; the dethroned prince a poor castaway in a foreign land; the noble young lady in a madhouse; the missionary priest under the thumb of his superiors.

As for the man of the middle class, and the working man, who conclude the list of this family, we are to read of them, as well as of the others, in the pages which now succeed these.

CHAPTER I.

THE MASQUERADE.

The following day to that on which Dagobert's wife (arrested for not accounting for the disappearance of General Simon's daughters) was led away before a magistrate, a noisy and animated scene was transpiring on the Place du Châtelet, in front of a building whose first floor and basement were used as the tap-rooms of the "Sucking Calf" public-house.

A carnival night was dying out.

Quite a number of maskers, grotesquely and shabbily bedecked, had rushed out of the low dance-houses in the Guildhall Ward, and were roaring out staves of songs as they crossed the square. But on catching sight of a second troop of mummers running about the water-side, the first party stopped to wait for the others to come up, rejoicing, with many a shout, in hopes of one of those verbal battles of slang and smutty talk which made Vadé so illustrious.

This mob—nearly all its members half seas over, soon

swollen by the many people who have to be up early to follow their crafts—suddenly concentrated in one of the corners of the square, so that a pale, deformed girl, who was going that way, was caught in the human tide. This was Mother Bunch. Up with the lark, she was hurrying to receive some work from her employer. Remembering how a mob had treated her when she had been arrested in the streets only the day before, by mistake, the poor work-girl's fears may be imagined when she was now surrounded by the revellers against her will. But, spite of all her efforts —very feeble, alas!—she could not stir a step, for the band of merry-makers, newly arriving, had rushed in among the others, shoving some of them aside, pushing far into the mass, and sweeping Mother Bunch—who was in their way —clear over to the crowd around the public-house.

The new-comers were much finer rigged out than the others, for they belonged to the gay, turbulent class which goes frequently to the Chaumière, the Prado, the Colisée, and other more or less rowdyish haunts of waltzers, made up generally of students, shop-girls, and counter-skippers, clerks, unfortunates, etc., etc.

This set, while retorting to the chaff of the other party, seemed to be very impatiently expecting some singularly desired person to put in her appearance.

The following snatches of conversation, passing between clowns and columbines, pantaloons and fairies, Turks and sultans, débardeurs and débardeuses, paired off more or less properly, will give an idea of the importance of the wished-for personage.

"They ordered the spread to be for seven in the morning, so their carriages ought to have come up afore now."

"Werry like, but the Bacchanal Queen has got to lead off the last dance in the Prado."

"I wish to thunder I'd 'a known that, and I'd 'a stayed there to see her—my beloved Queen!"

"Gobinet! if you call her your beloved Queen again, I'll scratch you! Here's a pinch for you, anyhow!"

"Ow, wow, Celeste! hands off! You are black-spotting the be-yutiful white satin jacket my mamma gave me when I first came out as Don *Pasqually!*"

"Why did you call the Bacchanal Queen your beloved, then? What am I, I'd like to know?"

"You are my beloved, but not my Queen, for there is only one moon in the nights of nature, and only one Bacchanal Queen in the nights at the Prado,"

"That's a bit from a valentine! You can't come over me with such rubbish."

"Gobinet's right! the Queen was an out-and-outer to-night!"

"In prime feather!"

"I never saw her more on the go!"

"And, my eyes! wasn't her dress stunning?"

"Took your breath away!"

"Crushing!"

"Heavy!"

"Im-mense!"

"The last kick!"

"No one but she can get up such dresses."

"And, then, the dance!"

"Oh, yes! it was at once bounding, waving, twisting! There is not such another bayadere under the night-cap of the sky!"

"Gobinet, give me back my shawl directly. You have already spoilt it by rolling it round your great body. I don't choose to have my things ruined for hulking beasts who call other women bayaderes!"

"Celeste, simmer down. I am disguised as a Turk, and, when I talk of bayaderes, I am only in character."

"Your Celeste is like them all, Gobinet; she's jealous of the Bacchanal Queen."

"Jealous!—do you think me jealous? Well now! that's too bad. If I chose to be as showy as she is they would talk of me as much. After all, it's only a nickname that makes her reputation! *nickname!*"

"In that you have nothing to envy her—since you are called Celeste!"

"You know well enough, Gobinet, that Celeste is my *real* name."

"Yes; but it's fancied a nickname—when one looks in your face."

"Gobinet, I will put that down to your account."

"And Oscar will help you to add it up, eh?"

"Yes; and you shall see the total. When I carry one, the remainder will not be you."

"Celeste, you make me cry! I only meant to say that your celestial name does not go well with your charming little face, which is still more mischievous than that of the Bacchanal Queen."

"That's right; wheedle me now, wretch!"

"I swear by the accursed head of my landlord, that, if

you liked, you could spread yourself as much as the Bacchanal Queen—which is saying a great deal."

"The fact is, that the Bacchanal has cheek enough, in all conscience."

"Not to speak of her fascinating the bobbies!"

"And magnetizing the beaks."

"They may get as angry as they please; she always finishes by making them laugh."

"And they all call her: Queen!"

"Last night she charmed a slop (as modest as a country girl) whose purity took up arms against the famous dance of the Storm-blown Tulip."

"What a quadrille! Sleepinbuff and the Bacchanal Queen, having opposite to them Rose-Pompon and Ninny Moulin!"

"And all four making tulips as full-blown as could be!"

"By-the-bye, is it true what they say of Ninny Moulin?"

"What?"

"Why that he is a writer, and scribbles pamphlets on religion."

"Yes, it is true. I have often seen him at my employer's, with whom he deals; a bad paymaster, but a jolly fellow!"

"And pretends to be devout, eh?"

"I believe you, my boy—when it is necessary; then he is my Lord Dumoulin, as large as life. He rolls his eyes, walks with his head on one side, and his toes turned in; but, when the piece is played out, he slips away to the balls of which he is so fond. The girls christened him Ninny Moulin. Add, that he drinks like a fish, and you have the photo of the cove. All this doesn't prevent his writing for the religious newspapers; and the saints, whom he lets in even oftener than himself, are ready to swear by him. You should see his articles and his tracts—only see, not read!—every page is full of the devil and his horns, and the desperate fryings which await your impious revolutionists—and then the authority of the bishops, the power of the Pope—hang it! how could I know it all? This toper, Ninny Moulin, gives good measure enough for their money!"

"The fact is, that he is both a heavy drinker and a heavy swell. How he rattled on with little Rose-Pompon in the dance and the full-blown tulip!"

"And what a rum chap he looked in his Roman helmet and top-boots."

"Rose-Pompon dances divinely, too; she has the poetic twist."

"And don't show her heels a bit!"

"Yes; but the Bacchanal Queen is six thousand feet above the level of any common leg-shaker. I always come back to her step last night in the full-blown tulip."

"It was huge!"

"It was serene!"

"If I were father of a family, I would entrust her with the education of my sons!"

"It was that step, however, which offended the bobby's modesty."

"The fact is, it was a little free."

"Free as air—so the policemen comes up to her, and says: 'Well, my Queen, is your foot to keep on a-goin' up forever?' 'No, modest warrior!' replies the Queen; 'I practice the step only once every evening, to be able to dance it when I am old. I made a vow of it, that you might become an inspector.'"

"What a comic card!"

"I don't believe she will remain always with Sleepinbuff."

"Because he has been a workman?"

"What nonsense! it would preciously become us, students and shopboys, to give ourselves airs! No; but I am astonished at the Queen's fidelity."

"Yes—they've been a team for three or four good months."

"She's wild upon him, and he on her."

"They must lead a gay life."

"Sometimes I ask myself where the devil Sleepinbuff gets all the money he spends. It appears that he pays all last night's expenses, three coaches-and-four, and a breakfast this morning for twenty, at ten francs a-head."

"They say he has come into some property. That's why Ninny Moulin, who has a good nose for eating and drinking, made acquaintance with him last night—leaving out of the question that he may have some designs on the Bacchanal Queen."

"He! In a lot! He's rather too ugly. The girls like to dance with him because he makes people laugh—but that's all. Little Rose-Pompon, who is such a pretty creature, has taken him as a harmless *chap-her-own*, in the absence of her student."

"The coaches! the coaches!" exclaimed the crowd, all with one voice.

Forced to stop in the midst of the maskers, Mother Bunch had not lost a word of this conversation, which was deeply painful to her, as it concerned her sister, whom she had not

seen for a long time. Not that the Bacchanal Queen had a bad heart; but the sight of the wretched poverty of Mother Bunch—a poverty which she had herself shared, but which she had not had the strength of mind to bear any longer—caused such bitter grief to the gay, thoughtless girl, that she would no more expose herself to it, after she had in vain tried to induce her sister to accept assistance, which the latter always refused, knowing that its source could not be honorable.

"The coaches! the coaches!" once more exclaimed the crowd, as they pressed forward with enthusiasm, so that Mother Bunch, carried on against her will, was thrust into the foremost rank of the people assembled to see the show.

It was, indeed, a curious sight. A man on horseback, disguised as a postilion, his blue jacket embroidered with silver, an enormous tail from which the powder escaped in puffs, and a hat adorned with long ribbons, preceded the first carriage, cracking his whip, and crying with all his might: "Make way for the Bacchanal Queen and her court!"

In an open carriage, drawn by four lean horses, on which rode two old postilions dressed as devils, was raised a downright pyramid of men and women, sitting, standing, leaning, in every possible variety of odd, extravagant, and grotesque costume; altogether an indescribable mass of bright colors, flowers, ribbons, tinsel and spangles. Amid this heap of strange forms and dresses appeared wild or graceful countenances, ugly or handsome features—but all animated by the feverish excitement of a jovial frenzy—all turned with an expression of fanatical admiration towards the second carriage, in which the Queen was enthroned, whilst they united with the multitude in reiterated shouts of "Long live the Bacchanal Queen."

This second carriage, open like the first, contained only the four dancers of the famous step of the Storm-blown Tulip—Ninny Moulin, Rose-Pompon, Sleepinbuff, and the Bacchanal Queen.

Dumoulin, the religious writer, who wished to dispute possession of Mme. de la Sainte-Colombe with his patron, M. Rodin—Dumoulin, surnamed Ninny Moulin, standing on the front cushions, would have presented a magnificent study for Callot or Gavarni, that eminent artist, who unites with the biting strength and marvellous fancy of an illustrious caricaturist, the grace, the poetry, and the depth of Hogarth.

Ninny Moulin, who was about thirty-five years of age, wore very much back upon his head a Roman helmet of

silver paper. A voluminous plume of black feathers, rising from a red wood holder, was stuck on one side of this head-gear, breaking the too classic regularity of its outline. Beneath this casque, shone forth the most rubicund and jovial face, that ever was purpled by the fumes of generous wine. A prominent nose, with its primitive shape modestly concealed beneath a luxuriant growth of pimples, half red, half violet, gave a funny expression to a perfectly beardless face; while a large mouth, with thick lips turning their insides outwards, added to the air of mirth and jollity which beamed from his large gray eyes, set flat in his head.

On seeing this joyous fellow, with a paunch like Silenus, one could not help asking how it was, that he had not drowned in wine, a hundred times over, the gall, bile, and venom which flowed from his pamphlets against the enemies of Ultramontanism, and how his Catholic beliefs could float upwards in the midst of these mad excesses of drink and dancing. The question would have appeared insoluble, if one had not remembered how many actors, who play the blackest and most hateful first robbers on the stage, are, when off it, the best fellow in the world.

The weather being cold, Nimy Moulin wore a kind of box-coat, which, being half-open, displayed his cuirass of scales, and his flesh-colored pantaloons, finishing just below the calf in a pair of yellow tops to his boots. Leaning forward in front of the carriage, he uttered wild shouts of delight, mingled with the words: "Long live the Bacchanal Queen!" —after which, he shook and whirled the enormous rattle he held in his hand. Standing beside him, Sleepinbuff waved on high a banner of white silk, on which were the words: "Love and joy to the Bacchanal Queen!"

Sleepinbuff was about twenty-five years of age. His countenance was gay and intelligent, surrounded by a collar of chestnut-colored whiskers; but, worn with late hours and excesses, it expressed a singular mixture of carelessness and hardihood, recklessness and mockery; still, no base or wicked passion had yet stamped there its fatal impress. He was the perfect type of the *Parisian*, as the term is generally applied, whether in the army, in the provinces, on board a king's ship, or a merchantman. It is not a compliment, and yet it is far from being an insult; it is an epithet which partakes at once of blame, admiration, and fear; for if, in this sense, the *Parisian* is often idle and rebellious, he is also quick at his work, resolute in danger, and always terribly satirical and fond of practical jokes.

He was dressed in a very flashy style. He wore a black velvet jacket with silver buttons, a scarlet waistcoat, trousers with broad blue stripes, a Cashmere shawl for a girdle with ends loosely floating, and a chimney-pot hat covered with flowers and streamers. This disguise set off his light, easy figure to great advantage.

At the back of the carriage, standing up on the cushions, were Rose-Pompon and the Bacchanal Queen.

Rose-Pompon, formerly a fringe-maker, was about seventeen years old, and had the prettiest and most winning little face imaginable. She was gayly dressed in débardeur costume. Her powdered wig, over which was smartly cocked on one side an orange and green cap, laced with silver, increased the effect of her bright black eyes, and of her round, carnation cheeks. She wore about her neck an orange-colored cravat, of the same material as her loose sash. Her tight jacket and narrow vest of light green velvet, with silver ornaments, displayed to the best advantage a charming figure, the pliancy of which must have well suited the evolutions of the Storm-blown Tulip. Her large trousers, of the same stuff and color as the jacket, were not calculated to hide any of her attractions.

The Bacchanal Queen, being at the least a head taller, leaned with one hand on the shoulder of Rose-Pompon. Mother Bunch's sister ruled, like a true monarch, over this mad revelry, which her very presence seemed to inspire, such influence had her own mirth and animation over all that surrounded her.

She was a tall girl of about twenty years of age, light and graceful, with regular features, and a merry, racketing air. Like her sister, she had magnificent chestnut hair, and large blue eyes; but instead of being soft and timid, like those of the young sempstress, the latter shone with indefatigable ardor in the pursuit of pleasure. Such was the energy of her vivacious constitution, that, notwithstanding many nights and days passed in one continued revel, her complexion was as pure, her cheeks as rosy, her neck as fresh and fair, as if she had that morning issued from some peaceful home. Her costume, though singular and fantastic, suited her admirably. It was composed of a tight, long-waisted bodice in cloth of gold, trimmed with great bunches of scarlet ribbon, the ends of which streamed over her naked arms, and a short petticoat of scarlet velvet, ornamented with golden beads and spangles. This petticoat reached half-way down a leg, at once trim and strong, in a white silk stocking, and red buskin with brass heel.

Never had any Spanish dancer a more supple, elastic, and tempting form, than this singular girl, who seemed possessed with the spirit of dancing and perpetual motion, for, almost every moment, a slight undulation of head, hips, and shoulders seemed to follow the music of an invisible orchestra; while the tip of her right foot, placed on the carriage door in the most alluring manner, continued to beat time—for the Bacchanal Queen stood proudly erect upon the cushions.

A sort of gilt diadem, the emblem of her noisy sovereignty, hung with little bells, adorned her forehead. Her long hair, in two thick braids, was drawn back from her rosy cheeks, and twisted behind her head. Her left hand rested on little Rose-Pompon's shoulder, and in her right she held an enormous nosegay, which she waved to the crowd, accompanying each salute with bursts of laughter.

It would be difficult to give a complete idea of this noisily animated and fantastic scene, which included also a third carriage, filled, like the first, with a pyramid of grotesque and extravagant masks. Amongst the delighted crowd, one person alone contemplated the picture with deep sorrow. It was Mother Bunch, who was still kept, in spite of herself, in the first rank of spectators.

Separated from her sister for a long time, she now beheld her in all the pomp of her singular triumph, in the midst of the cries of joy, and the applause of her companions in pleasure. Yet the eyes of the young sempstress grew dim with tears; for, though the Bacchanal Queen seemed to share in the stunning gayety of all around her—though her face was radiant with smiles, and she appeared fully to enjoy the splendors of her temporary elevation—yet she had the sincere pity of the poor workwoman, almost in rags, who was seeking, with the first dawn of morning, the means of earning her daily bread.

Mother Bunch had forgotten the crowd, to look only at her sister, whom she tenderly loved—only the more tenderly, that she thought her situation to be pitied. With her eyes fixed on the joyous and beautiful girl, her pale and gentle countenance expressed the most touching and painful interest.

All at once, as the brilliant glance of the Bacchanal Queen travelled along the crowd, it lighted on the sad features of Mother Bunch.

"My sister!" exclaimed Cephyse—such was the name of the Bacchanal Queen—"My sister!"—and with one bound, light as a ballet-dancer, she sprang from her movable throne (which fortunately just happened to be stopping), and,

rushing up to the hunchback, embraced her affectionately.

All this had passed so rapidly, that the companions of the Bacchanal Queen, still stupefied by the boldness of her perilous leap, knew not how to account for it; whilst the masks who surrounded Mother Bunch drew back in surprise, and the latter, absorbed in the delight of embracing her sister, whose caresses she returned, did not even think of the singular contrast between them, which was sure to soon excite the astonishment and hilarity of the crowd.

Cephyse was the first to think of this, and wishing to save her sister at least one humiliation, she turned towards the carriage, and said: "Rose-Pompon, throw me down my cloak; and, Ninny Moulin, open the door directly!"

Having received the cloak, the Bacchanal Queen hastily wrapped it round her sister, before the latter could speak or move. Then, taking her by the hand, she said to her: "Come! come!"

"I!" cried Mother Bunch, in alarm. "Do not think of it!"

"I must speak with you. I will get a private room, where we shall be alone. So make haste, dear little sister! Do not resist before all these people—but come!"

The fear of becoming a public sight decided Mother Bunch, who, confused moreover with the adventure, trembling and frightened, followed her sister almost mechanically, and was dragged by her into the carriage, of which Ninny Moulin had just opened the door. And so, with the cloak of the Bacchanal Queen covering Mother Bunch's poor garments and deformed figure, the crowd had nothing to laugh at, and only wondered what this meeting could mean, while the coaches pursued their way to the eating-house in the Place du Châtelet.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTRAST.

Some minutes after the meeting of Mother Bunch with the Bacchanal Queen, the two sisters were alone together in a small room in the tavern.

"Let me kiss you again," said Cephyse to the young sempstress; "at least now we are alone, you will not be afraid?"

In the effort of the Bacchanal Queen to clasp Mother Bunch in her arms, the cloak fell from the form of the latter,

At sight of those miserable garments, which she had hardly had time to observe on the Place du Châtelet, in the midst of the crowd, Cephyse clasped her hands, and could not repress an exclamation of painful surprise. Then, approaching her sister, that she might contemplate her more closely, she took her thin, icy palms between her own plump hands, and examined for some minutes, with increasing grief, the suffering, pale, unhappy creature, ground down by watching and privations, and half-clothed in a poor, patched cotton gown.

"Oh, sister! to see you thus!" Unable to articulate another word, the Bacchanal Queen threw herself on the other's neck, and burst into tears. Then, in the midst of her sobs, she added: "Pardon! pardon!"

"What is the matter, my dear Cephyse?" said the young sewing-girl, deeply moved, and gently disengaging herself from the embrace of her sister. "Why do you ask my pardon?"

"Why?" resumed Cephyse, raising her countenance, bathed in tears, and purple with shame; "is it not shameful of me, to be dressed in all this frippery, and throwing away so much money in follies, while you are thus miserably clad, and in need of everything—perhaps dying of want, for I have never seen your poor face look so pale and worn."

"Be at ease, dear sister! I am not ill. I was up rather late last night, and that makes me a little pale—but pray do not cry—it grieves me."

The Bacchanal Queen had but just arrived, radiant in the midst of the intoxicated crowd, and yet it was Mother Bunch who was now employed in consoling her!

An incident occurred, which made the contrast still more striking. Joyous cries were heard suddenly in the next apartment, and these words were repeated with enthusiasm: "Long live the Bacchanal Queen!"

Mother Bunch trembled, and her eyes filled with tears, as she saw her sister with her face buried in her hands, as if overwhelmed with shame. "Cephyse," she said, "I entreat you not to grieve so. You will make me regret the delight of this meeting, which is indeed happiness to me! It is so long since I saw you! But tell me—what ails you?"

"You despise me perhaps—you are right," said the Bacchanal Queen, drying her tears.

"Despise you? for what?"

"Because I lead the life I do, instead of having the courage to support misery along with you."

The grief of Cephyse was so heart-breaking, that Mother Bunch, always good and indulgent, wishing to console her, and raise her a little in her own estimation, said to her tenderly: "In supporting it bravely for a whole year, my good Cephyse, you have had more merit and courage than I should have in bearing with it my whole life."

"Oh, sister! do not say that."

"In simple truth," returned Mother Bunch, "to what temptations is a creature like me exposed? Do I not naturally seek solitude, even as you seek a noisy life of pleasure? What wants have I? A very little suffices."

"But you have not always that little?"

"No—but, weak and sickly as I seem, I can endure some privations better than you could. Thus hunger produces in me a sort of numbness, which leaves me very feeble—but for you, robust and full of life, hunger is fury, is madness Alas! you must remember how many times I have seen you suffering from those painful attacks, when work failed us in our wretched garret, and we could not even earn our four francs a week—so that we had nothing—absolutely nothing to eat—for our pride prevented us from applying to the neighbors."

"You have preserved the right to that honest pride."

"And you as well! Did you not struggle as much as a human creature could? But strength fails at last—I know you well, Cephyse—it was hunger that conquered you, and the painful necessity of constant labor, which was yet insufficient to supply our common wants."

"But you could endure those privations—you endure them still."

"Can you compare me with yourself? Look," said Mother Bunch, taking her sister by the hand, and leading her to a mirror placed above a couch, "look!—Dost think that God made you so beautiful, endowed you with such quick and ardent blood, with so joyous, animated, grasping a nature, and with such taste and fondness for pleasure, that your youth might be spent in a freezing garret, hid from the sun, nailed constantly to your chair, clad almost in rags, and working without rest and without hope? No! for He has given us other wants than those of eating and drinking. Even in our humble condition, does not beauty require some little ornament? Does not youth require some movement, pleasure, gayety? Do not all ages call for relaxation and rest? Had you gained sufficient wages to satisfy hunger, to have a day or so's amusement in the week, after working

every other day for twelve or fifteen hours, and to procure the neat and modest dress which so charming a face might naturally claim--you would never have asked for more, I am sure of it--you have told me as much a hundred times. You have yielded, therefore, to an irresistible necessity, because your wants are greater than mine."

"It is true," replied the Bacchanal Queen, with a pensive air; "if I could but have gained eighteenpence a day, my life would have been quite different: for, in the beginning, sister, I felt cruelly humiliated to live at a man's expense."

"Yes, yes—it was inevitable, my dear Cephyse; I must pity, but cannot blame you. You did not choose your destiny; but, like me, you have submitted to it."

"Poor sister!" said Cephyse, embracing the speaker tenderly; "you can encourage and console me in the midst of your own misfortunes, when I ought to be pitying you."

"Be satisfied!" said Mother Bunch; "God is just and good. If He has denied me many advantages, He has given me my joys, as you have yours."

"Joys?"

"Yes, and great ones—without which life would be too burdensome, and I should not have the courage to go through with it."

"I understand you," said Cephyse, with emotion; "you still know how to devote yourself for others, and that lightens your own sorrows."

"I do what I can, but, alas! it is very little; yet when I succeed," added Mother Bunch, with a faint smile, "I am as proud and happy as a poor little ant, who, after a great deal of trouble, has brought a big straw to the common nest. But do not let us talk any more of me."

"Yes, but I must, even at the risk of making you angry," resumed the Bacchanal Queen, timidly; "I have something to propose to you which you once before refused. Jacques Rennepont has still, I think, some money left—we are spending it in follies—now and then giving a little to poor people we may happen to meet—I beg of you, let me come to your assistance—I see in your poor face, you cannot conceal it from me, that you are wearing yourself out with toil."

"Thanks, my dear Cephyse, I know your good heart; but I am not in want of anything. The little I gain is sufficient for me."

"You refuse me," said the Bacchanal Queen, sadly, "because you know that my claim to this money is not

honorable—be it so—I respect your scruples. But you will not refuse a service from Jacques; he has been a workman, like ourselves, and comrades should help each other. Accept it, I beseech you, or I shall think you despise me."

"And I shall think you despise me, if you insist any more upon it, my dear Cephyse," said Mother Bunch, in a tone at once so mild and firm that the Bacchanal Queen saw that all persuasion would be in vain. She hung her head sorrowfully, and a tear again trickled down her cheek.

"My refusal grieves you," said the other, taking her hand; "I am truly sorry—but reflect—and you will understand me."

"You are right," said the Bacchanal Queen, bitterly, after a moment's silence; "you cannot accept assistance from my lover—it was an insult to propose it to you. There are positions in life so humiliating, that they soil even the good one wishes to do."

"Cephyse, I did not mean to hurt you—you know it well."

"Oh! believe me," replied the Bacchanal Queen, "gay and giddy as I am, I have sometimes moments of reflection, even in the midst of my maddest joy. Happily, such moments are rare."

"And what do you think of, then?"

"Why, that the life I lead is hardly the thing; then I resolve to ask Jacques for a small sum of money, just enough to subsist on for a year, and form the plan of joining you, and gradually getting to work again."

"The idea is a good one; why not act upon it?"

"Because, when about to execute this project, I examined myself sincerely, and my courage failed. I feel that I could never resume the habit of labor, and renounce this mode of life, sometimes rich, as to-day, sometimes precarious,—but at least free and full of leisure, joyous and without care, and at worst a thousand times preferable to living upon four francs a week. Not that interest has guided me. Many times have I refused to exchange a lover, who had little or nothing, for a rich man, that I did not like. Nor have I ever asked anything for myself. Jacques has spent perhaps ten thousand francs the last three or four months, yet we only occupy two half-furnished rooms, because we always live out of doors, like the birds: fortunately, when I first loved him, he had nothing at all, and I had just sold some jewels that had been given me, for a hundred francs, and put this sum in the lottery. As mad people and fools are

always lucky, I gained a prize of four thousand francs. Jacques was as gay, and light-headed, and full of fun as myself, so we said: 'We love each other very much, and, as long as this money lasts, we will keep up the racket; when we have no more, one of two things will happen—either we shall be tired of one another, and so part—or else we shall love each other still, and then, to remain together, we shall try and get work again: and, if we cannot do so, and yet will not part—a bushel of charcoal will do our business!'"

"Good heaven!" cried Mother Bunch, turning pale.

"Be satisfied! we have not come to that. We had still something left, when a kind of agent, who had paid court to me, but who was so ugly that I could not bear him for all his riches, knowing that I was living with Jacques, asked me to—— But why should I trouble you with all these details? In one word, he lent Jacques money, on some sort of a doubtful claim he had, as was thought, to inherit some property. It is with this money that we are amusing ourselves—as long as it lasts."

"But, my dear Cephyse, instead of spending this money so foolishly, why not put it out to interest, and marry Jacques, since you love him?"

"Oh! in the first place," replied the Bacchanal Queen, laughing, as her gay and thoughtless character resumed its ascendancy, "to put money out to interest gives one no pleasure. All the amusement one has is to look at a little bit of paper, which one gets in exchange for the nice little pieces of gold, with which one can purchase a thousand pleasures. As for marrying, I certainly like Jacques better than I ever liked any one; but it seems to me, that, if we were married, all our happiness would end—for while he is only my lover, he cannot reproach me with what has passed—but, as my husband, he would be sure to upbraid me, sooner or later, and, if my conduct deserves blame, I prefer giving it to myself, because I shall do it more tenderly."

"Mad girl that you are! But this money will not last forever. What is to be done next?"

"Afterwards!—Oh! that's all in the moon. To-morrow seems to me as if it would not come for a hundred years. If we were always saying: 'We must die one day or the other'—would life be worth having?"

The conversation between Cephyse and her sister was here again interrupted by a terrible uproar, above which sounded the sharp, shrill noise of Ninny Moulin's rattle. To this tumult succeeded a chorus of barbarous cries, in the

midst of which were distinguishable these words, which shook the very windows: "The Queen! the Bacchanal Queen!"

Mother Bunch started at this sudden noise.

"It is only my court, who are getting impatient," said Cephyse—and this time she could laugh.

"Heavens!" cried the sewing-girl, in alarm; "if they were to come here in search of you?"

"No, no—never fear."

"But listen! do you not hear those steps? they are coming along the passage—they are approaching. Pray, sister, let me go out alone, without being seen by all these people."

That moment the door was opened, and Cephyse ran towards it. She saw in the passage a deputation headed by Ninny Moulin, who was armed with his formidable rattle, and followed by Rose-Pompon and Sleepinbuff.

"The Bacchanal Queen! or I poison myself with a glass of water!" cried Ninny Moulin.

"The Bacchanal Queen! or I publish my banns of marriage with Ninny Moulin!" cried little Rose-Pompon, with a determined air.

"The Bacchanal Queen! or the court will rise in arms, and carry her off by force!" said another voice.

"Yes, yes—let us carry her off!" repeated a formidable chorus.

"Jacques, enter alone!" said the Bacchanal Queen, notwithstanding these pressing summonses; then, addressing her court in a majestic tone, she added: "In ten minutes, I shall be at your service—and then for a —— of a time!"

"Long live the Bacchanal Queen," cried Dumoulin, shaking his rattle as he retired, followed by the deputation, whilst Sleepinbuff entered the room alone.

"Jacques," said Cephyse, "this is my good sister."

"Enchanted to see you," said Jacques, cordially; "the more so as you will give me some news of my friend Agricola. Since I began to play the rich man, we have not seen each other, but I like him as much as ever, and think him a good and worthy fellow. You live in the same house. How is he?"

"Alas, sir! he and his family have had many misfortunes. He is in prison."

"In prison!" cried Cephyse.

"Agricola in prison! what for?" said Sleepinbuff.

"For a trifling political offence. We had hoped to get him out on bail."

"Certainly; for five hundred francs it could be done," said Sleepinbuff.

"Unfortunately, we have not been able; the person upon whom we relied——"

The Bacchanal Queen interrupted the speaker by saying to her lover: "Do you hear, Jacques? Agricola in prison, for want of five hundred francs!"

"To be sure! I hear and understand all about it. No need of your winking. Poor fellow! he was the support of his mother."

"Alas! yes, sir—and it is the more distressing, as his father has but just returned from Russia, and his mother——"

"Here," said Sleepinbuff, interrupting, and giving Mother Bunch a purse; "take this all the expenses here have been paid beforehand—this is what remains of my last bag. You will find here some twenty-five or thirty Napoleons, and I cannot make a better use of them than to serve a comrade in distress. Give them to Agricola's father; he will take the necessary steps, and to-morrow Agricola will be at his forge, where I had much rather he should be than myself."

"Jacques, give me a kiss!" said the Bacchanal Queen.

"Now, and afterwards, and again and again!" said Jacques, joyously embracing the queen.

Mother Bunch hesitated for a moment; but reflecting that, after all, this sum of money, which was about to be spent in follies, would restore life and happiness to the family of Agricola, and that hereafter these very five hundred francs, when returned to Jacques, might be of the greatest use to him, she resolved to accept this offer. She took the purse, and, with tearful eyes, said to him: "I will not refuse your kindness, M. Jacques; you are so good and generous. Agricola's father will thus at least have one consolation, in the midst of heavy sorrows. Thanks! many thanks!"

"There is no need to thank me; money was made for others as well as ourselves."

Here, without, the noise recommenced more furiously than ever, and Ninny Moulin's rattle sent forth the most doleful sounds.

"Cephyse," said Sleepinbuff, "they will break everything to pieces, if you do not return to them, and I have nothing left to pay for the damage. Excuse us," added he, laughing, "but you see that royalty has its duties."

Cephyse, deeply moved, extended her arms to Mother Bunch, who threw herself into them, shedding sweet tears.

"And now," said she, to her sister, "when shall I see you again?"

"Soon—though nothing grieves me more than to see you in want, out of which I am not allowed to help you."

"You will come, then, to see me? It is a promise?"

"I promise you in her name," said Jacques; "we will pay a visit to you and your neighbor Agricola."

"Return to the company, Cephyse, and amuse yourself with a light heart, for M. Jacques has made a whole family happy."

So saying, and after Sleepinbuff had ascertained that she could go down without being seen by his noisy and joyous companions, Mother Bunch quietly withdrew, eager to carry one piece of good news at least to Dagobert; but intending, first of all, to go to the Rue de Babylone, to the garden-house formerly occupied by Adrienne de Cardoville. We shall explain hereafter the cause of this determination.

As the girl quitted the eating-house, three men plainly and comfortably dressed, were watching before it, and talking in a low voice. Soon after, they were joined by a fourth person, who rapidly descended the stairs of the tavern.

"Well?" said the three first, with anxiety.

"He is there."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Are there two Sleepers-in-buff on earth?" replied the other. "I have just seen him; he is togged out like one of the swell mob. They will be at table for three hours at least."

"Then wait for me, you others. Keep as quiet as possible. I will go and fetch the *captain*, and the game is bagged." So saying, one of the three men walked off quickly, and disappeared in a street leading from the square.

* * * * * * *

At this same instant the Bacchanal Queen entered the banqueting-room, accompanied by Jacques, and was received with the most frenzied acclamations from all sides.

"Now then," cried Cephyse, with a sort of feverish excitement, as if she wished to stun herself; "now then, friends—noise and tumult, hurricane and tempest, thunder and earthquake—as much as you please!" Then, holding out her glass to Ninny Moulin, she added: "Pour out! pour out!"

"Long live the Queen!" cried they all, with one voice.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAROUSE.

THE Bacchanal Queen, having Sleepinbuff and Rose-Pompon opposite her, and Ninny Moulin on her right hand, presided at the repast, called a réveille-matin (wake-morning), generously offered by Jacques to his companions in pleasure.

Both young men and girls seemed to have forgotten the fatigues of a ball, begun at eleven o'clock in the evening, and finished at six in the morning; and all these couples, joyous as they were amorous and indefatigable, laughed, ate, and drank, with youthful and Pantagruelian ardor, so that, during the first part of the feast, there was less chatter than clatter of plates and glasses.

The Bacchanal Queen's countenance was less gay, but much more animated than usual; her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes announced a feverish excitement; she wished to drown reflection, cost what it might. Her conversation with her sister often recurred to her, and she tried to escape from such sad remembrances.

Jacques regarded Cephyse from time to time with passionate adoration; for, thanks to the singular conformity of character, mind, and taste between him and the Bacchanal Queen, their attachment had deeper and stronger roots than generally belong to ephemeral connections founded upon pleasure. Cephyse and Jacques were themselves not aware of all the power of a passion which till now had been surrounded only by joys and festivities, and not yet been tried by any untoward event.

Little Rose-Pompon, left a widow a few days before by a student, who, in order to end the carnival in style, had gone into the country to raise supplies from his family, under one of those fabulous pretences which tradition carefully preserves in colleges of law and medicine—Rose-Pompon, we repeat, an example of rare fidelity, determined not to compromise herself, had taken for a chaperon the inoffensive Ninny Moulin.

This latter, having doffed his helmet, exhibited a bald head, encircled by a border of black, curling hair, pretty long at the back of the head. By a remarkable Bacchic phenomenon, in proportion as intoxication gained upon

him, a sort of zone, as purple as his jovial face, crept by degrees over his brow, till it obscured even the shining whiteness of his crown. Rose-Pompon, who knew the meaning of this symptom, pointed it out to the company, and exclaimed with a loud burst of laughter: "Take care, Ninny Moulin! the tide of the wine is coming in."

"When it rises above his head he will be drowned," added the Bacchanal Queen.

"Oh, Queen! don't disturb me; I am meditating," answered Dumoulin, who was getting tipsy. He held in his hand, in the fashion of an antique goblet, a punch-bowl filled with wine, for he despised the ordinary glasses, because of their small size.

"Meditating," echoed Rose-Pompon, "Ninny Moulin is meditating. Be attentive!"

"He is meditating; he must be ill then!"

"What is he meditating? an illegal dance?"

"A forbidden Anacreontic attitude?"

"Yes, I am meditating," returned Dumoulin, gravely; "I am meditating upon wine, generally and in particular—wine, of which the immortal Bossuet"—Dumoulin had the very bad habit of quoting Bossuet when he was drunk—"of which the immortal Bossuet says (and he was a judge of good liquor): 'In wine is courage, strength, joy, and spiritual fervor'—when one has any brains," added Ninny Moulin, by way of parenthesis.

"Oh, my! how I adore your Bossuet!" said Rose-Pompon.

"As for my particular meditation, it concerns the question, whether the wine at the marriage of Cana was red or white. Sometimes I incline to one side, sometimes to the other—and sometimes to both at once."

"That is going to the bottom of the question," said Sleepinbuff.

"And, above all, to the bottom of the bottles," added the Bacchanal Queen.

"As your majesty is pleased to observe; and already, by dint of reflection and research, I have made a great discovery—namely, that, if the wine at the marriage of Cana was red——"

"It couldn't 'a' been white," said Rose-Pompon, judiciously.

"And if I had arrived at the conviction that it was neither white nor red?" asked Dumoulin, with a magisterial air.

"That could only be when you had drunk till all was *blue*," observed Sleepinbuff.

"The partner of the Queen says well. One may be too athirst for science; but never mind! From all my studies on this question, to which I have devoted my life—I shall await the end of my respectable career with the sense of having emptied tuns with a historical—theological—and archæological tone!"

It is impossible to describe the jovial grimace and tone with which Dumoulin pronounced and accentuated these last words, which provoked a general laugh.

"*Archieolopically?*" said Rose-Pompon. "What sawnee is that? Has he a tail? does he live in the water?"

"Never mind," observed the Bacchanal Queen; "these are words of wise men and conjurers; they are like horse-hair bustles—they serve for filling out—that's all. I like better to drink; so fill the glasses, Ninny Moulin; some champagne, Rose-Pompon; here's to the health of your Philemon and his speedy return!"

"And to the success of his plant upon his stupid and stingy family!" added Rose-Pompon.

The toast was received with unanimous applause.

"With the permission of her majesty and her court," said Dumoulin, "I propose a toast to the success of a project which greatly interests me, and has some resemblance to Philemon's jockeying. I fancy that the toast will bring me luck."

"Let's have it, by all means!"

"Well, then—success to my marriage!" said Dumoulin, rising.

These words provoked an explosion of shouts, applause, and laughter. Ninny Moulin shouted, applauded, laughed even louder than the rest, opening wide his enormous mouth, and adding to the stunning noise the harsh springing of his rattle, which he had taken up from under his chair.

When the storm had somewhat subsided, the Bacchanal Queen rose and said: "I drink to the health of the future Madame Ninny Moulin."

"Oh, Queen! your courtesy touches me so sensibly that I must allow you to read in the depths of my heart the name of my future spouse," exclaimed Dumoulin. "She is called Madame Honorée-Modeste-Messaline-Angèle de la Sainte-Colombe, widow."

"Bravo! bravo!"

"She is sixty years old, and has more thousands of francs-a-

year than she has hair in her gray moustache or wrinkles on her face; she is so superbly fat that one of her gowns would serve as a tent for this honorable company. I hope to present my future spouse to you on Shrove-Tuesday, in the costume of a shepherdess that has just devoured her flock. Some of them wish to *con*vert her—but I have undertaken to *di*vert her, which she will like better. You must help me to plunge her headlong into all sorts of skylarking jollity."

"We will plunge her into anything you please."

"She shall dance like *sixty!*" said Rose-Pompon, humming a popular tune.

"She will overawe the police."

"We can say to them: 'Respect this lady; your mother will perhaps be as old some day!'"

Suddenly, the Bacchanal Queen rose; her countenance wore a singular expression of bitter and sardonic delight. In one hand she held a glass full to the brim. "I hear the Cholera is approaching in his seven-league boots," she cried. "I drink luck to the Cholera!" And she emptied the bumper.

Notwithstanding the general gayety, these words made a gloomy impression; a sort of electric shudder ran through the assemblage, and nearly every countenance became suddenly serious.

"Oh, Cephyse!" said Jacques, in a tone of reproach.

"Luck to the Cholera," repeated the Queen, fearlessly. "Let him spare those who wish to live, and kill together those who dread to part!"

Jacques and Cephyse exchanged a rapid glance, unnoticed by their joyous companions, and for some time the Bacchanal Queen remained silent and thoughtful.

"If you put it that way, it is different," cried Rose-Pompon, boldly. "To the Cholera! may none but good fellows be left on earth!"

In spite of this variation, the impression was still painfully impressive. Dumoulin, wishing to cut short this gloomy subject, exclaimed: "Devil take the dead, and long live the living! And, talking of chaps who both live and live well, I ask you to drink a health most dear to our joyous queen, the health of our Amphitryon. Unfortunately, I do not know his respectable name, having only had the advantage of making his acquaintance this night; he will excuse me, then, if I confine myself to proposing the health of Sleepinbuff—a name by no means offensive to my mod-

esty, as Adam never slept in any other manner. I drink to Sleepinbuff."

"Thanks, old son!" said Jacques, gayly; "were I to forget your name, I should call you 'Have-a-sip?' and I am sure that you would answer: 'I will.'"

"I will directly!" said Dumoulin, making the military salute with one hand, and holding out the bowl with the other.

"As we have drunk together," resumed Sleepinbuff, cordially, "we ought to know each other thoroughly. I am Jacques Rennepont?"

"Rennepont!" cried Dumoulin, who appeared struck by the name, in spite of his half-drunkenness; "you are Rennepont?"

"Rennepont in the fullest sense of the word. Does that astonish you?"

"There is a very ancient family of that name—the Counts of Rennepont."

"The deuce there is!" said the other, laughing.

"The Counts of Rennepont are also Dukes of Cardoville," added Dumoulin.

"Now, come, old fellow! do I look as if I belonged to such a family?—I, a workman out for a spree?"

"You a workman? why, we are getting into the Arabian Nights!" cried Dumoulin, more and more surprised. "You give us a Belshazzar's banquet, with accompaniment of carriages and four, and yet are a workman? Only tell me your trade, and I will join you, leaving the Vine of the Divine to take care of itself."

"Come, I say! don't think that I am a printer of flimsies, and a smasher!" replied Jacques, laughing.

"Oh, comrade! no such suspicion——"

"It would be excusable, seeing the rigs I run. But I'll make you easy on that point. I am spending an inheritance."

"Eating and drinking an uncle, no doubt?" said Dumoulin, benevolently.

"Faith, I don't know."

"What! you don't know whom you are eating and drinking?"

"Why, you see, in the first place, my father was a bone grubber."

"The devil he was!" said Dumoulin, somewhat out of countenance, though in general not over-scrupulous in the choice of his bottle-companions; but, after the first surprise,

he resumed, with the most charming amenity: "There are some rag-pickers very high by scent—I mean descent!"

"To be sure! you may think to laugh at me," said Jacques, "but you are right in this respect, for my father was a man of very great merit. He spoke Greek and Latin like a scholar, and often told me that he had not his equal in mathematics; besides, he had travelled a good deal."

"Well, then," resumed Dumoulin, whom surprise had partly sobered, "you may belong to the family of the Counts of Rennepont, after all."

"In which case," said Rose-Pompon, laughing, "your father was not a gutter-snipe by trade, but only for the honor of the thing."

"No, no—worse luck! it was to earn his living," replied Jacques; "but, in his youth, he had been well off. By what appeared, or rather by what did not appear, he had applied to some rich relation, and the rich relation had said to him: 'Much obliged! try the work'us.' Then he wished to make use of his Greek, and Latin, and mathematics. Impossible to do anything—Paris, it seems, being choke-full of learned men—so my father had to look for his bread at the end of a hooked stick, and there, too, he must have found it, for I ate of it during two years, when I came to live with him after the death of an aunt, with whom I had been staying in the country."

"Your respectable father must have been a sort of philosopher," said Dumoulin; "but, unless he found an inheritance in a dustbin, I don't see how you came into your property."

"Wait for the end of the song. At twelve years of age I was an apprentice at the factory of M. Tripeaud; two years afterwards, my father died of an accident, leaving me the furniture of our garret—a mattress, a chair, and a table—and, moreover, in an old Eau de Cologne box, some papers (written, it seems, in English), and a bronze medal, worth about ten sous, chain and all. He had never spoken to me of these papers, so, not knowing if they were good for anything, I left them at the bottom of an old trunk, instead of burning them—which was well for me, since it is upon these papers that I have had money advanced."

"What a godsend!" said Dumoulin. "But somebody must have known that you had them?"

"Yes; one of those people that are always looking out for old debts came to Cephyse, who told me all about it; and, after he had read the papers, he said that the affair was doubtful, but that he would lend me ten thousand francs on

it, if I liked. Ten thousand francs was a large sum, so I snapped him up!"

"But you must have supposed that these old papers were of great value."

"Faith, no! since my father, who ought to have known their value, had never realized on them—and then, you see, ten thousand francs in good, bright coin, falling as it were from the clouds, are not to be sneezed at—so I took them—only the man made me do a bit of stiff as guarantee, or something of that kind."

"Did you sign it?"

"Of course—what did I care about it? The man told me it was only a matter of form. He spoke the truth, for the bill fell due a fortnight ago, and I have heard nothing of it. I have still about a thousand francs in his hands, for I have taken him for my banker. And that's the way, old pal, that I'm able to flourish and be jolly all day long, as pleased as Punch to have left my old grinder of a master, M. Tripeaud."

As he pronounced this name, the joyous countenance of Jacques became suddenly overcast. Cephyse, no longer under the influence of the painful impression she had felt for a moment, looked uneasily at Jacques, for she knew the irritation which the name of M. Tripeaud produced within him.

"M. Tripeaud," resumed Sleepinbuff, "is one that would make the good bad, and the bad worse. They say that a good rider makes a good horse; they ought to say that a good master makes a good workman. Zounds! when I think of that fellow!" cried Sleepinbuff, striking his hand violently on the table.

"Come, Jacques—think of something else!" said the Bacchanal Queen. "Make him laugh, Rose-Pompon."

"I am not in a humor to laugh," replied Jacques, abruptly, for he was getting excited from the effects of the wine; "it is more than I can bear to think of that man. It exasperates me! it drives me mad! You should have heard him saying: 'Beggarly workmen! rascally workmen! they grumble that they have no food in their bellies; well, then, we'll give them bayonets to stop their hunger.'* And there's the children in his factory—you should see them, poor little creatures! —working as long as the men—wasting away, and dying by the dozen—what odds? as soon as they were dead plenty of others came to take their places—not like horses, which can only be replaced with money."

* These atrocious words were actually spoken during the Lyons Riots.

"Well, it is clear, that you do not like your old master," said Dumoulin, more and more surprised at his Amphitryon's gloomy and thoughtful air, and, regretting that the conversation had taken this serious turn, he whispered a few words in the ear of the Bacchanal Queen, who answered by a sign of intelligence.

"I don't like M. Tripeaud!" exclaimed Jacques. "I hate him—and shall I tell you why? Because it is as much his fault as mine, that I have become a good-for-nothing loafer. I don't say it to screen myself; but it is the truth. When I was 'prenticed to him as a lad, I was all heart and ardor, and so bent upon work, that I used to take my shirt off to my task, which, by the way, was the reason that I was first called Sleepinbuff. Well! I might have toiled myself to death; not one word of encouragement did I receive. I came first to my work, and was the last to leave off; what matter? it was not even noticed. One day, I was injured by the machinery. I was taken to the hospital. When I came out, weak as I was, I went straight to my work; I was not to be frightened; the others, who knew their master well, would often say to me: 'What a muff you must be, little one! What good will you get by working so hard?' —still I went on. But, one day, a worthy old man, called Father Arsène, who had worked in the house many years, and was a model of good conduct, was suddenly turned away, because he was getting too feeble. It was a death-blow to him; his wife was infirm, and, at his age, he could not get another place. When the foreman told him he was dismissed, he could not believe it, and he began to cry for grief. At that moment, M. Tripeaud passes; Father Arsène begs him with clasped hands to keep him at half-wages. 'What!' says M. Tripeaud, shrugging his shoulders; 'do you think that I will turn my factory into a house of invalids? You are no longer able to work—so be off!' 'But I have worked forty years of my life; what is to become of me?' cried poor Father Arsène. 'That is not my business,' answered M. Tripeaud; and, addressing his clerk, he added: 'Pay what is due for the week, and let him cut his stick.' Father Arsène did cut his stick; that evening, he and his old wife suffocated themselves with charcoal. Now, you see, I was then a lad; but that story of Father Arsène taught me, that, however hard you might work, it would only profit your master, who would not even thank you for it, and leave you to die on the flags in your old age. So all my fire was damped, and I said to myself: 'What's the

use of doing more than I just need? If I gain heaps of gold for M. Tripeaud, shall I get an atom of it?' Therefore, finding neither pride nor profit in my work, I took a disgust for it—just did barely enough to earn my wages—became an idler and a rake—and said to myself: 'When I get too tired of labor, I can always follow the example of Father Arsène and his wife.'"

Whilst Jacques resigned himself to the current of these bitter thoughts, the other guests, incited by the expressive pantomime of Dumoulin and the Bacchanal Queen, had tacitly agreed together; and, on a signal from the Queen, who leaped upon the table, and threw down the bottles and glasses with her foot, all rose and shouted, with the accompaniment of Ninny Moulin's rattle: "The storm blown Tulip! the quadrille of the Storm-blown Tulip!"

At these joyous cries, which burst suddenly, like shell, Jacques started; then gazing with astonishment at his guests, he drew his hand across his brow, as if to chase away the painful ideas that oppressed him, and exclaimed: "You are right. Forward the first couple! Let us be merry!"

In a moment, the table, lifted by vigorous arms, was removed to the extremity of the banqueting-room; the spectators, mounted upon chairs, benches, and window-ledges, began to sing in chorus the well-known air of les Etudiants, so as to serve instead of orchestra, and accompany the quadrille formed by Sleepinbuff, the Queen, Ninny Moulin, and Rose-Pompon.

Dumoulin, having entrusted his rattle to one of the guests, resumed his extravagant Roman helmet and plume; he had taken off his great-coat at the commencement of the feast, so that he now appeared in all the splendor of his costume. His cuirass of bright scales ended in a tunic of feathers, not unlike those worn by the savages, who form the oxen's escort on Mardi Gras. Ninny Moulin had a huge paunch and thin legs, so that the latter moved about at pleasure in the gaping mouths of his large top boots.

Little Rose-Pompon, with her pinched-up cocked-hat stuck on one side, her hands in the pockets of her trousers, her bust a little inclined forward, and undulating from right to left, advanced to meet Ninny-Moulin; the latter danced, or rather leaped towards her, his left leg bent under him, his right leg stretched forward, with the toe raised, and the heel gliding on the floor; moreover, he struck his neck with his left hand, and by a simultaneous movement, stretched

forth his right, as if he would have thrown dust in the eyes of his opposite partner.

This first figure met with great success, and the applause was vociferous, though it was only the innocent prelude to the step of the Storm-blown Tulip—when suddenly the door opened, and one of the waiters, after looking about for an instant, in search of Sleepinbuff, ran to him, and whispered some words in his ear.

"Me!" cried Jacques, laughing; "here's a go!"

The waiter added a few more words, when Sleepinbuff's face assumed an expression of uneasiness, as he answered: "Very well! I come directly,"—and he made a step towards the door.

"What's the matter, Jacques?" asked the Bacchanal Queen, in some surprise.

"I'll be back immediately. Some one take my place. Go on with the dance," said Sleepinbuff, as he hastily left the room.

"Something, that was not put down in the bill," said Dumoulin; "he will soon be back."

"That's it," said Cephyse. "Now *cavalier suel!*" she added, as she took Jacques's place, and the dance continued.

Ninny Moulin had just taken hold of Rose-Pompon with his right hand, and of the Queen with his left, in order to advance between the two, in which figure he showed off his buffoonery to the utmost extent, when the door again opened, and the same waiter, who had called out Jacques, approached Cephyse with an air of consternation, and whispered in her ear, as he had before done to Sleepinbuff.

The Bacchanal Queen grew pale, uttered a piercing scream, and rushed out of the room without a word, leaving her guests in stupefaction.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAREWELL.

The Bacchanal Queen, following the waiter, arrived at the bottom of the staircase. A coach was standing before the door of the house. In it she saw Sleepinbuff, with one of the men who, two hours before, had been waiting on the Place du Châtelet.

On the arrival of Cephyse, the man got down, and said to

Jacques, as he drew out his watch: "I give you a quarter of an hour; it is all that I can do for you, my good fellow; after that we must start. Do not try to escape, for we'll be watching at the coach doors."

With one spring, Cephyse was in the coach. Too much overcome to speak before, she now exclaimed, as she took her seat by Jacques, and remarked the paleness of his countenance: "What is it? What do they want with you?"

"I am arrested for debt," said Jacques, in a mournful voice.

"You!" exclaimed Cephyse, with a heart-rending sob.

"Yes, for that bill, or guarantee, they made me sign. And yet the man said it was only a form—the rascal!"

"But you have money in his hands; let him take that on account."

"I have not a copper; he sends me word by the bailiff, that not having paid the bill, I shall not have the last thousand francs."

"Then let us go to him, and entreat him to leave you at liberty. It was he who came to propose to lend you this money. I know it well, as he first addressed himself to me. He will have pity on you."

"Pity?—a money broker pity? No! no!"

"Is there then no hope? none?" cried Cephyse clasping her hands in anguish. "But there must be something done," she resumed. "He promised you——"

"You can see how he keeps his promises," answered Jacques, with bitterness. "I signed, without even knowing what I signed. The bill is over-due; everything is in order; it would be vain to resist. They have just explained all that to me."

"But they cannot keep you long in prison. It is impossible."

"Five years, if I do not pay. As I'll never be able to do so, my fate is certain."

"Oh! what a misfortune! and not to be able to do anything!" said Cephyse, hiding her face in her hands.

"Listen to me, Cephyse," resumed Jacques, in a voice of mournful emotion; "since I am here, I have thought only of one thing—what is to become of you?"

"Never mind me!"

"Not mind you?—art mad? What will you do? The furniture of our two rooms is not worth two hundred francs. We have squandered our money so foolishly, that we have not even paid our rent. We owe three quarters, and we

must not therefore count upon the furniture. I leave you without a coin. At least *I* shall be fed in prison—but how will you manage to live?"

"What is the use of grieving beforehand?"

"I ask you, how you will live to-morrow?" cried Jacques.

"I will sell my costume, and some other clothes. I will send you half the money, and keep the rest. That will last some days."

"And afterwards?—afterwards?"

"Afterwards?—why, then—I don't know—how can I tell you! Afterwards—I'll look about me."

"Hear me, Cephyse," resumed Jacques, with bitter agony. "It is now that I first know how much I love you. My heart is pressed as in a vice at the thought of leaving you—and I shudder to think what is to become of you." Then—drawing his hand across his forehead, Jacques added: "You see we have been ruined by saying—"To-morrow will never come!"—for to-morrow *has* come. When I am no longer with you, and you have spent the last penny of the money gained by the sale of your clothes—unfit for work as you have become—what will you do next? Must I tell you what you will do!—you will forget me and——" Then, as if he recoiled from his own thoughts, Jacques exclaimed, with a burst of rage and despair—"Great Heaven! if that were to happen, I should dash my brains out against the stones!"

Cephyse guessed the half-told meaning of Jacques, and throwing her arms around his neck, she said to him: "I take another lover?—never! I am like you, for I now first know how much I love you."

"But, my poor Cephyse—how will you live?"

"Well, I shall take courage. I will go back and dwell with my sister, as in old times; we will work together, and so earn our bread. I'll never go out, except to visit you. In a few days your creditor will reflect, that, as you can't pay him ten thousand francs, he may as well set you free. By that time I shall have once more acquired the habit of working. You shall see, you shall see!—and you also will again acquire this habit. We shall live poor, but content. After all, we have had plenty of amusement for six months, while so many others have never known pleasure all their lives. And believe me, my dear Jacques, when I say to you—I shall profit by this lesson. If you love me, do not feel the least uneasiness; I tell you, that I would rather die a hundred times, than have another lover."

"Kiss me," said Jacques, with eyes full of tears. "I believe you—yes, I believe you—and you give me back my courage, both for now and hereafter. You are right; we must try and get to work again, or else nothing remains but Father Arsène's bushel of charcoal; for, my girl," added Jacques, in a low and trembling voice, "I have been like a drunken man these six months, and now I am getting sober, and see whither we were going. Our means once exhausted, I might perhaps have become a robber, and you——"

"Oh, Jacques! don't talk so—it is frightful," interrupted Cephyse; "I swear to you that I will return to my sister—that I will work—that I will have courage!"

Thus saying, the Bacchanal Queen was very sincere; she fully intended to keep her word, for her heart was not yet completely corrupted. Misery and want had been with her, as with so many others, the cause and the excuse of her worst errors. Until now, she had at least followed the instincts of her heart, without regard to any base or venal motive. The cruel position in which she beheld Jacques had so far exalted her love, that she believed herself capable of resuming, along with Mother Bunch, that life of sterile and incessant toil, full of painful sacrifices and privations, which once had been impossible for her to bear, and which the habits of a life of leisure and dissipation would now render still more difficult.

Still, the assurances which she had just given Jacques calmed his grief and anxiety a little; he had sense and feeling enough to perceive that the fatal track which he had hitherto so blindly followed was leading both him and Cephyse directly to infamy.

One of the bailiffs, having knocked at the coach-door, said to Jacques: "My lad, you have only five minutes left—so make haste."

"So, courage, my girl—courage!" said Jacques.

"I will; you may rely upon me."

"Are you going upstairs again?"

"No—oh no!" said Cephyse. "I have now a horror of this festivity."

"Everything is paid for, and the waiter will tell them not to expect us back. They will be much astonished," continued Jacques, "but it's all the same now."

"If you could only go with me to our lodging," said Cephyse, "this man would perhaps permit it, so as not to enter Sainte-Pélagie in that dress."

"Oh! he will not forbid you to accompany me; but, as he

will be with us in the coach, we shall not be able to talk freely in his presence. Therefore, let me speak reason to you for the first time in my life. Remember what I say, my dear Cephyse—and the counsel will apply to me as well as to yourself," continued Jacques, in a grave and feeling tone —"resume from to-day the habit of labor. It may be painful, unprofitable—never mind—do not hesitate, for too soon will the influence of this lesson be forgotten. By-and-bye it will be too late, and then you will end like so many unfortunate creatures——"

"I understand," said Cephyse, blushing; but I will rather die than lead such a life."

"And there you will do well—for in that case," added Jacques, in a deep and hollow voice, "I will myself show you how to die."

"I count upon you, Jacques," answered Cephyse, embracing her lover with excited feeling; then she added, sorrowfully: "It was a kind of presentiment, when just now I felt so sad, without knowing why, in the midst of all our gayety —and drank to the Cholera, so that we might die together."

"Well! perhaps the Cholera will come," resumed Jacques, with a gloomy air; "that would save us the charcoal, which we may not even be able to buy."

"I can only tell you one thing, Jacques, that to live and die together, you will always find me ready."

"Come, dry your eyes," said he, with profound emotion. "Do not let us play the children before these men."

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Some minutes after, the coach took the direction to Jacques's lodging, where he was to change his clothes, before proceeding to the debtors' prison.

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Let us repeat, with regard to the hunchback's sister—for there are things which cannot be too often repeated—that one of the most fatal consequences of the Inorganization of Labor is the Insufficiency of Wages.

The insufficiency of wages forces inevitably the greater number of young girls, thus badly paid, to seek their means of subsistence in connections which deprave them.

Sometimes they receive a small allowance from their lovers, which, joined to the produce of their labor, enables them to live. Sometimes, like the sempstress's sister, they throw aside their work altogether, and take up their abode

with the man of their choice, should he be able to support the expense. It is during this season of pleasure and idleness that the incurable leprosy of sloth takes lasting possession of these unfortunate creatures.

This is the first phase of degradation that the guilty carelessness of Society imposes on an immense number of workwomen, born with instincts of modesty, and honesty, and uprightness.

After a certain time they are deserted by their seducers—perhaps when they are mothers. Or, it may be, that foolish extravagance consigns the imprudent lover to prison, and the young girl finds herself alone, abandoned, without the means of subsistence.

Those who have still preserved courage and energy go back to their work—but the examples are very rare. The others, impelled by misery, and by habits of indolence, fall into the lowest depths.

And yet we must pity, rather than blame them, for the first and virtual cause of their fall has been the insufficient remuneration of labor and sudden reduction of pay.

Another deplorable consequence of this inorganization is the disgust which workmen feel for their employment, in addition to the insufficiency of their wages. And this is quite conceivable, for nothing is done to render their labor attractive, either by variety of occupations, or by honorary rewards, or by proper care, or by remuneration proportionate to the benefits which their toil provides, or by the hope of rest after long years of industry. No—the country thinks not, cares not, either for their wants or their rights.

And yet, to take only one example, machinists and workers in foundries, exposed to boiler explosions, and the contact of formidable engines, run every day greater dangers than soldiers in time of war, display rare practical sagacity, and render to industry—and, consequently, to their country—the most incontestable service, during a long and honorable career, if they do not perish by the bursting of a boiler, or have not their limbs crushed by the iron teeth of a machine.

In this last case, does the workman receive a recompense equal to that which awaits the soldier's praiseworthy, but sterile courage—a place in an asylum for invalids? No.

What does the country care about it? And if the master should happen to be ungrateful, the mutilated workman, incapable of further service, may die of want in some corner.

Finally, in our pompous festivals of commerce, do we ever assemble any of the skilful workmen who alone have woven

those admirable stuffs, forged and damascened those shining weapons, chiselled those goblets of gold and silver, carved the wood and ivory of that costly furniture, and set those dazzling jewels with such exquisite art? No.

In the obscurity of their garrets, in the midst of a miserable and starving family, hardly able to subsist on their scanty wages, these workmen have contributed, at least, one half to bestow those wonders upon their country, which make its wealth, its glory, and its pride.

A minister of commerce, who had the least intelligence of his high functions and duties, would require of every factory that exhibits on these occasions, the selection by vote of a certain number of candidates, amongst whom the manufacturer would point out the one that appeared most worthy to represent the working classes in these great industrial solemnities.

Would it not be a noble and encouraging example to see the master propose for public recompense and distinction the workman, deputed by his peers, as amongst the most honest, laborious, and intelligent of his profession? Then one most grievous injustice would disappear, and the virtues of the workman would be stimulated by a generous and noble ambition—he would have an interest in doing well.

Doubtless, the manufacturer himself, because of the intelligence he displays, the capital he risks, the establishment he founds, and the good he sometimes does, has a legitimate right to the prizes bestowed upon him. But why is the workman to be rigorously excluded from these rewards, which have so powerful an influence upon the people? Are generals and officers the only ones that receive rewards in the army? And when we have remunerated the captains of this great and powerful army of industry, why should we neglect the privates?

Why for them is there no sign of public gratitude? no kind or consoling word from august lips? Why do we not see in France, a single workman wearing a medal as a reward for his courageous industry, his long and laborious career? The token and the little pension attached to it, would be to him a double recompense, justly deserved. But, no! for humble labor that sustains the State, there is only forgetfulness, injustice, indifference, and disdain!

By this neglect of the public, often aggravated by individual selfishness and ingratitude, our workmen are placed in a deplorable situation.

Some of them, notwithstanding their incessant toil, lead

a life of privations, and die before their time cursing the social system that rides over them. Others find a temporary oblivion of their ills in destructive intoxication. Others again—in great number—having no interest, no advantage, no moral or physical inducement to do more or better, confine themselves strictly to just that amount of labor which will suffice to earn their wages. Nothing attaches them to their work, because nothing elevates, honors, glorifies it in their eyes. They have no defence against the reductions of indolence; and if, by some chance, they find means of living awhile in repose, they give way by degrees to habits of laziness and debauchery, and sometimes the worst passions soil forever natures originally willing, healthy and honest—and all for want of that protecting and equitable superintendence which should have sustained, encouraged, and recompensed their first worthy and laborious tendencies.

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We now follow Mother Bunch, who, after seeking for work from the person that usually employed her, went to the Rue de Babylone, to the lodge lately occupied by Adrienne de Cardoville.

CHAPTER V.

FLORINE.

While the Bacchanal Queen and Sleepinbuff terminated so sadly the most joyous portion of their existence, the sempstress arrived at the door of the summer-house in the Rue de Babylone.

Before ringing she dried her tears; a new grief weighed upon her spirits. On quitting the tavern, she had gone to the house of the person who usually found her in work; but she was told that she could not have any, because it could be done a third more cheaply by women in prison. Mother Bunch, rather than lose her last resource, offered to take it at the third less; but the linen had been already sent out; and the girl could not hope for employment for a fortnight to come, even if submitting to this reduction of wages. One may conceive the anguish of the poor creature; the prospect before her was to die of hunger, if she would not beg or steal. As for her visit to the lodge in the Rue de Babylone, it will be explained presently.

She rang the bell timidly; a few minutes after, Florine opened the door to her. The waiting-maid was no longer adorned after the charming taste of Adrienne; on the contrary, she was dressed with an affectation of austere simplicity. She wore a high-necked dress of a dark color, made full enough to conceal the light elegance of her figure. Her bands of jet-black hair were hardly visible beneath the flat border of a starched white cap, very much resembling the head-dress of a nun. Yet, in spite of this unornamental costume, Florine's pale countenance was still admirably beautiful.

We have said that, placed by former misconduct at the mercy of Rodin and M. d'Aigrigny, Florine had served them as a spy upon her mistress, notwithstanding the marks of kindness and confidence she had received from her. Yet Florine was not entirely corrupted; and she often suffered painful, but vain, remorse at the thought of the infamous part she was thus obliged to perform.

At sight of Mother Bunch, whom she recognized—for she had told her, the day before, of Agricola's arrest and Mdlle. de Cardoville's madness—Florine recoiled a step, so much was she moved with pity at the appearance of the young sempstress. In fact, the idea of being thrown out of work, in the midst of so many other painful circumstances, had made a terrible impression upon the young workwoman; the traces of recent tears furrowed her cheeks—without her knowing it, her features expressed the deepest despair—and she appeared so exhausted, so weak, so overcome, that Florine offered her arm to support her, and said to her kindly: "Pray walk in and rest yourself; you are very pale, and seem to be ill and fatigued."

So saying, Florine led her into a small room, with fireplace and carpet, and made her sit down in a tapestried armchair by the side of a good fire. Georgette and Hebe had been dismissed, and Florine was left alone in care of the house.

When her guest was seated, Florine said to her with an air of interest: "Will you not take anything? A little orange flower-water and sugar, warm."

"I thank you, mademoiselle," said Mother Bunch, with emotion, so easily was her gratitude excited by the least mark of kindness; she felt, too, a pleasing surprise, that her poor garments had not been the cause of repugnance or disdain on the part of Florine.

"I thank you, mademoiselle," said she, "but I only re-

quire a little rest, for I come from a great distance. If you will permit me——"

"Pray rest yourself as long as you like, mademoiselle; I am alone in this pavilion since the departure of my poor mistress,"—here Florine blushed and sighed;—"so, pray make yourself quite at home. Draw near the fire—you will be more comfortable—and, gracious! how wet your feet are! —place them upon this stool."

The cordial reception given by Florine, her handsome face and agreeable manners, which were not those of an ordinary waiting-maid, forcibly struck Mother Bunch, who, notwithstanding her humble condition, was peculiarly susceptible to the influence of everything graceful and delicate. Yielding, therefore, to these attractions, the young sempstress, generally so timid and sensitive, felt herself almost at her ease with Florine.

"How obliging you are, mademoiselle!" said she, in a grateful tone. "I am quite confused with your kindness."

"I wish I could do you some greater service than offer you a place at the fire, mademoiselle. Your appearance is so good and interesting."

"Oh, mademoiselle!" said the other, with simplicity, almost in spite of herself; "it does one so much good to sit by a warm fire!" Then, fearing, in her extreme delicacy, that she might be thought capable of abusing the hospitality of her entertainer, by unreasonably prolonging her visit, she added: "the motive that has brought me here is this. Yesterday, you informed me that a young workman, named Agricola Baudoin, had been arrested in this house."

"Alas! yes, mademoiselle. At the moment, too, when my poor mistress was about to render him assistance."

"I am Agricola's adopted sister," resumed Mother Bunch, with a slight blush; "he wrote to me yesterday evening from prison. He begged me to tell his father to come here as soon as possible, in order to inform Mdlle. de Cardoville that he, Agricola, had important matters to communicate to her, or to any person that she might send; but that he could not venture to mention them in a letter, as he did not know if the correspondence of prisoners might not be read by the governor of the prison."

"What!" said Florine, with surprise; "to my mistress, M. Agricola has something of importance to communicate?"

"Yes, mademoiselle; for, up to this time, Agricola is ignorant of the great calamity that has befallen Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"True; the attack was indeed so sudden," said Florine, casting down her eyes, "that no one could have foreseen it."

"It must have been so," answered Mother Bunch; "for, when Agricola saw Mdlle. de Cardoville for the first time, he returned home, struck with her grace, and delicacy, and goodness."

"As were all who approached my mistress," said Florine, sorrowfully.

"This morning," resumed the sewing-girl, "when, according to Agricola's instructions, I wished to speak to his father on the subject, I found him already gone out, for he also is a prey to great anxieties; but my adopted brother's letter appeared to me so pressing, and to involve something of such consequence to Mdlle. de Cardoville, who had shown herself so generous towards him, that I came here immediately."

"Unfortunately, as you already know, my mistress is no longer here."

"But is there no member of her family to whom, if I could not speak myself, I might at least send word by you, that Agricola has something to communicate of importance to this young lady?"

"It is strange!" said Florine, reflecting, and without replying. Then, turning towards the sempstress, she added: "You are quite ignorant of the nature of these revelations?"

"Completely so, mademoiselle; but I know Agricola. He is all honor and truth, and you may believe whatever he affirms. Besides, he would have no interest——"

"Good gracious!" interrupted Florine, suddenly, as if struck with a sudden light; "I have just remembered something. When he was arrested in a hiding-place where my mistress had concealed him, I happened to be close at hand, and M. Agricola said to me, in a quick whisper: 'Tell your generous mistress that her goodness to me will not go unrewarded, and that my stay in that hiding-place may not be useless to her.' That was all he could say to me, for they hurried him off instantly. I confess that I saw in those words only the expression of his gratitude, and his hope of proving it one day to my mistress; but now that I connect them with the letter he has written you——" said Florine, reflecting.

"Indeed!" remarked Mother Bunch, "there is certainly some connection between his hiding-place here and the important secrets which he wishes to communicate to your mistress, or one of her family."

"The hiding-place had neither been inhabited nor visited for some time," said Florine, with a thoughtful air; "M. Agricola may have found therein something of interest to my mistress."

"If his letter had not appeared to me so pressing," resumed the other, "I should not have come hither; but have left him to do so himself, on his release from prison, which now, thanks to the generosity of one of his old fellow-workmen, cannot be very distant. But, not knowing if bail would be accepted to-day, I have wished faithfully to perform his instructions. The generous kindness of your mistress made it my first duty."

Like all persons whose better instincts are still roused from time to time, Florine felt a sort of consolation in doing good whenever she could with impunity—that is to say, without exposing herself to the inexorable resentments of those on whom she depended. Thanks to Mother Bunch, she might now have an opportunity of rendering a great service to her mistress. She knew enough of the Princess de Saint-Dizier's hatred of her niece, to feel certain that Agricola's communication could not, from its very importance, be made with safety to any but Mdlle. de Cardoville herself. She therefore said very gravely: "Listen to me, mademoiselle! I will give you a piece of advice which will, I think, be useful to my poor mistress—but which would be very fatal to me if you did not attend to my recommendations."

"How so, mademoiselle?" said the hunchback, looking at Florine with extreme surprise.

"For the sake of my mistress, M. Agricola must confide to no one, except herself, the important things he has to communicate."

"But, if he cannot see Mdlle. Adrienne, may he not address himself to some of her family?"

"It is from her family, above all, that he must conceal whatever he knows. Mdlle. Adrienne may recover, and then M. Agricola can speak to her. But should she never get well again, tell your adopted brother that it is better for him to keep his secret than to place it (which would infallibly happen) at the disposal of the enemies of my mistress."

"I understand you, mademoiselle," said Mother Bunch, sadly. "The family of your generous mistress do not love her, and perhaps persecute her?"

"I cannot tell you more on this subject now; and, as regards myself, let me conjure you to obtain M. Agricola's

promise that he will not mention to any one in the world the step you have taken, or the advice I have given you. The happiness—no, not the happiness," resumed Florine, bitterly, as if that were a lost hope, "not the happiness—but the peace of my life depends upon your discretion."

"Oh! be satisfied!" said the sewing-girl, both affected and amazed by the sorrowful expression of Florine's countenance; "I will not be ungrateful. No one in the world but Agricola shall know that I have seen you."

"Thank you—thank you, mademoiselle," cried Florine, with emotion.

"Do you thank me?" said the other, astonished to see the large tears roll down her cheeks.

"Yes! I am indebted to you for a moment of pure, unmixed happiness; for I have perhaps rendered a service to my dear mistress, without risking the increase of the troubles that already overwhelm me."

"You are not happy, then?"

"That astonishes you; but, believe me, whatever may be your fate, I would gladly change with you."

"Alas, mademoiselle!" said the sempstress: "you appear to have too good a heart, for me to let you entertain such a wish—particularly now."

"What do you mean?"

"I hope sincerely, mademoiselle," proceeded Mother Bunch, with deep sadness, "that you may never know what it is to want work, when labor is your only resource."

"Are you reduced to that extremity?" cried Florine, looking anxiously at the young sempstress, who hung her head, and made no answer. She reproached herself, in her excessive delicacy, with having made a communication which resembled a complaint, though it had only been wrung from her by the thought of her dreadful situation.

"If it is so," went on Florine, "I pity you with all my heart; and yet I know not, if my misfortunes are not still greater than yours."

Then, after a moment's reflection, Florine exclaimed, suddenly: "But let me see! If you are really in that position, I think I can procure you some work."

"Is it possible, mademoiselle?" cried Mother Bunch. "I should never have dared to ask you such a service; but your generous offer commands my confidence, and may save me from destruction. I will confess to you, that, only this morning, I was thrown out of an employment which enabled me to earn four francs a week."

"Four francs a week!" exclaimed Florine, hardly able to believe what she heard.

"It was little, doubtless," replied the other; "but enough for me. Unfortunately, the person who employed me, has found out where it can be done still cheaper."

"Four francs a week!" repeated Florine, deeply touched by so much misery and resignation. "Well! I think I can introduce you to persons, who will secure you wages of at least two francs a day."

"I could earn two francs a day? Is it possible?"

"Yes, there is no doubt of it; only, you would have to go out by the day, unless you chose to take a place as servant."

"In my position," said Mother Bunch, with a mixture of timidity and pride, "one has no right, I know, to be overnice; yet I should prefer to go out by the day, and still more to remain at home, if possible, even though I were to gain less."

"To go out is unfortunately an indispensable condition," said Florine.

"Then I must renounce this hope," answered Mother Bunch, timidly; "not that I refuse to go out to work—but those who do so, are expected to be decently clad—and I confess without shame, because there is no disgrace in honest poverty, that I have no better clothes than these."

"If that be all," said Florine, hastily, "they will find you the means of dressing yourself properly."

Mother Bunch looked at Florine with increasing surprise. These offers were so much above what she could have hoped, and what indeed was generally earned by needlewomen, that she could hardly credit them.

"But," resumed she, with hesitation, "why should any one be so generous to me, mademoiselle? How should I deserve such high wages?"

Florine started. A natural impulse of the heart, a desire to be useful to the semptress, whose mildness and resignation greatly interested her, had led her to make a hasty proposition; she knew at what price would have to be purchased the advantages she proposed, and she now asked herself, if the hunchback would ever accept them on such terms. But Florine had gone too far to recede, and she durst not tell all. She resolved, therefore, to leave the future to chance; and as those, who have themselves fallen, are little disposed to believe in the infallibility of others, Florine said to herself, that perhaps in the desperate position in which she was, Mother Bunch would not be so scrupulous after all.

Therefore she said: "I see, mademoiselle, that you are astonished at offers so much above what you usually gain; but I must tell you, that I am now speaking of a pious institution, founded to procure work for deserving young women. This establishment, which is called St. Mary's Society, undertakes to place them out as servants, or by the day as needlewomen. Now this institution is managed by such charitable persons, that they themselves undertake to supply an outfit, when the young women received under their protection are not sufficiently well clothed to accept the places destined for them."

This plausible explanation of Florine's magnificent offers appeared to satisfy the hearer. "I can now understand the high wages of which you speak, mademoiselle," resumed she; "only I have no claim to be patronized by the charitable persons who direct this establishment."

"You suffer—you are laborious and honest—those are sufficient claims; only, I must tell you, they will ask if you perform regularly your religious duties."

"No one loves and blesses God more fervently than I do, mademoiselle," said the hunchback, with mild firmness; "but certain duties are an affair of conscience, and I would rather renounce this patronage, than be compelled——"

"Not the least in the world. Only, as I told you, there are very pious persons at the head of this institution, and you must not be astonished at their questions on such a subject. Make the trial, at all events; what do you risk? If the propositions are suitable—accept them; if, on the contrary, they should appear to touch your liberty of conscience, you can always refuse—your position will not be the worse for it."

Mother Bunch had nothing to object to this reasoning, which left her at perfect freedom, and disarmed her of all suspicion. "On these terms, mademoiselle," said she, "I accept your offer, and thank you with all my heart. But who will introduce me?"

"I will—to-morrow, if you please."

"But they will perhaps desire to make some inquiries about me."

"The venerable Mother Saint-Perpétue, Superior of St. Mary's Convent, where the institution is established, will, I am sure, appreciate your good qualities without inquiry; but if otherwise, she will tell you, and you can easily satisfy her. It is then agreed—to-morrow."

"Shall I call upon you here, mademoiselle?"

"No; as I told you before, they must not know that you came here on the part of M. Agricola, and a second visit might be discovered, and excite suspicion. I will come and fetch you in a coach; where do you live?"

"At No. 3, Rue Brise-Miche; as you are pleased to give yourself so much trouble, mademoiselle, you have only to ask the dyer, who acts as porter, to call down Mother Bunch."

"*Mother* Bunch?" said Florine, with surprise.

"Yes, mademoiselle," answered the sempstress, with a sad smile; "it is the name every one gives me. And you see," added the hunchback, unable to restrain a tear, "it is because of my ridiculous infirmity, to which this name alludes, that I dread going out to work among strangers, because there are so many people who laugh at one, without knowing the pain they occasion. But," continued she, drying her eyes, "I have no choice, and must make up my mind to it."

Florine, deeply affected, took the speaker's hand, and said to her: "Do not fear. Misfortunes like yours must inspire compassion, not ridicule. May I not inquire for you by your real name?"

"It is Magdalen Soliveau; but I repeat, mademoiselle, that you had better ask for Mother Bunch, as I am hardly known by any other name."

"I will, then, be in the Rue Brise-Miche to-morrow, at twelve o'clock."

"Oh, mademoiselle! how can I ever requite your goodness?"

"Don't speak of it: I only hope my interference may be of use to you. But of this you must judge for yourself. As for M. Agricola, do not answer his letter; wait till he is out of prison, and then tell him to keep his secret till he can see my poor mistress."

"And where is the dear young lady now?"

"I cannot tell you. I do not know where they took her, when she was attacked with this frenzy. You will expect me to-morrow?"

"Yes—to-morrow," said Mother Bunch.

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The convent whither Florine was to conduct the hunchback contained the daughters of Marshal Simon, and was next door to the lunatic asylum of Dr. Baleinier, in which Adrienne de Cardoville was confined.

CHAPTER VI.

MOTHER SAINTE-PERPETUE.

St. Mary's Convent, whither the daughters of Marshal Simon had been conveyed, was a large old building, the vast garden of which was on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, one of the most retired places in Paris, particularly at this period. The following scenes took place on the 12th February, the eve of the fatal day, on which the members of the family of Rennepont, the last descendants of the sister of the Wandering Jew, were to meet together in the Rue St. François. St. Mary's Convent was a model of perfect regularity. A superior council, composed of influential ecclesiastics, with Father d'Aigrigny for president, and of women of great reputed piety, at the head of whom was the Princess de Saint-Dizier, frequently assembled in deliberation, to consult on the means of extending and strengthening the secret and powerful influence of this establishment, which had already made remarkable progress.

Skilful combinations and deep foresight had presided at the foundation of St. Mary's Convent, which, in consequence of numerous donations, possessed already real estate to a great extent, and was daily augmenting its acquisitions. The religious community was only a pretext; but, thanks to an extensive connection, kept up by means of the most decided members of the ultramontane (*i. e.* high-church) party, a great number of rich orphans were placed in the convent, there to receive a solid, austere, religious education, very preferable, it was said, to the frivolous instruction which might be had in the fashionable boarding-schools, infected by the corruption of the age. To widows also, and lone women who happened moreover to be rich, the convent offered a sure asylum from the dangers and temptations of the world; in this peaceful retreat, they enjoyed a delightful calm, and secured their salvation, whilst surrounded by the most tender and affectionate attentions. Nor was this all. Mother Sainte-Perpétue, the superior of the convent, undertook in the name of the institution to procure for the faithful, who wished to preserve the interior of their houses from the depravity of the age, companions for aged ladies, domestic servants, or needlewomen working by the day, all

selected persons whose morality could be warranted. Nothing would seem more worthy of sympathy and encouragement than such an institution; but we shall presently unveil the vast and dangerous network of intrigue concealed under these charitable and holy appearances. The lady Superior, Mother Sainte-Perpétue, was a tall woman of about forty years of age, clad in a stuff dress of the Carmelite tan color, and wearing a long rosary at her waist; a white cap under the chin, and a long black veil, closely encircled her thin, sallow face. A number of deep wrinkles had impressed their transverse furrows in her forehead of yellow ivory; her marked and prominent nose was bent like the beak of a bird of prey; her black eye was knowing and piercing; the expression of her countenance was at once intelligent, cold and firm.

In the general management of the pecuniary affairs of the community, Mother Sainte-Perpétue would have been a match for the most cunning attorney. When women are possessed of what is called a talent for business, and apply to it their keen penetration, their indefatigable perseverance, their prudent dissimulation, and, above all, that quick and exact insight, which is natural to them, the results are often prodigious. To Mother Sainte-Perpétue, a woman of the coolest and strongest intellect, the management of the vast transactions of the community was mere child's play. No one knew better how to purchase a depreciated property, to restore it to its former value, and then sell it with advantage; the price of stock, the rate of exchange, the current value of the shares in the different companies, were all familiar to her; she had yet never been known to make a bad speculation, when the question was to invest any of the funds which were given by pious souls for the purposes of the convent. She had established in the house the utmost order and discipline, and, above all, an extreme economy. The constant aim of all her efforts was to enrich, not herself, but the community she directed; for the spirit of association, when become a collective egotism, gives to corporations the faults and vices of an individual. Thus a congregation may dote upon power and money, just as a miser loves them for their own sake. But it is chiefly with regard to estates that congregations act like a single man. They dream of landed property; it is their fixed idea, their fruitful monomania. They pursue it with their most sincere, and warm, and tender wishes.

The first estate is to a rising little community what the

wedding-trousseau is to a young bride, his first horse to a youth, his first success to a poet, to a gay girl her first fifty-guinea shawl; because, after all, in this material age, an estate gives a certain rank to a society on the Religious Exchange, and has so much the more effect upon the simple-minded, that all these partnerships in the work of salvation, which end by becoming immensely rich, begin with modest poverty as social stock-in-trade, and charity towards their neighbors as security reserve fund. We may therefore imagine what bitter and ardent rivalry must exist between the different congregations with regard to the various estates that each can lay claim to; with what ineffable satisfaction the richer society crushes the poorer beneath its inventory of houses, and farms, and paper securities! Envy and hateful jealousy, rendered still more irritable by the leisure of a cloistered life, are the necessary consequences of such a comparison; and yet nothing is less Christian—in the adorable acceptation of that divine word—nothing has less in common with the true, essential, and religiously social spirit of the gospel, than this insatiable ardor to acquire wealth by every possible means—this dangerous avidity, which is far from being atoned for, in the eyes of public opinion, by a few paltry alms, bestowed in the narrow spirit of exclusion and intolerance.

Mother Sainte-Perpétue was seated before a large cylindrical-fronted desk, in the centre of an apartment simply but comfortably furnished. An excellent fire burned within the marble chimney, and a soft carpet covered the floor. The superior, to whom all letters addressed to the sisters or the boarders were every day delivered, had just been opening the first, according to her acknowledged right, and carefully unsealing the second, without their knowing it, according to a right that she ascribed to herself, of course, with a view to the salvation of those dear creatures; and partly, perhaps, a little to make herself acquainted with their correspondence, for she also had imposed on herself the duty of reading all letters that were sent from the convent, before they were put into the post. The traces of this pious and innocent inquisition were easily effaced, for the good mother possessed a whole arsenal of steel tools, some very sharp, to cut the paper imperceptibly round the seal—others, pretty little rods, to be slightly heated and rolled round the edge of the seal, when the letter had been read and replaced in its envelope, so that the wax, spreading as it melted, might cover the first incision. Moreover, from a praiseworthy feeling of justice

and equality, there was in the arsenal of the good mother a little fumigator of the most ingenious construction, the damp and dissolving vapor of which was reserved for the letters humbly and modestly secured with wafers, thus softened, they yielded to the least effort, without any tearing of the paper. According to the importance of the revelations, which she thus gleaned from the writers of the letters, the superior took notes more or less extensive. She was interrupted in this investigation by two gentle taps at the bolted door. Mother Sainte-Perpétue immediately let down the sliding cylinder of her cabinet, so as to cover the secret arsenal, and went to open the door with a grave and solemn air. A lay sister came to announce to her that the Princess de Saint-Dizier was waiting for her in the parlor, and that Mdlle. Florine, accompanied by a young girl, deformed and badly dressed, was waiting at the door of the little corridor.

"Introduce the princess first," said Mother Sainte-Perpétue. And, with charming forethought, she drew an armchair to the fire. Mme. de Saint-Dizier entered.

Without pretensions to juvenile coquetry, still the princess was tastefully and elegantly dressed. She wore a black velvet bonnet of the most fashionable make, a large blue cashmere shawl, and a black satin dress, trimmed with sable, to match the fur of her muff.

"To what good fortune am I again to-day indebted for the honor of your visit, my dear daughter?" said the superior, graciously.

"A very important recommendation, my dear mother, though I am in a great hurry. I am expected at the house of his Eminence, and have, unfortunately, only a few minutes to spare. I have again to speak of the two orphans who occupied our attention so long yesterday."

"They continue to be kept separate, according to your wish; and this separation has had such an effect upon them that I have been obliged to send this morning for Dr. Baleinier, from his asylum. He found much fever joined to great depression, and, singular enough, absolutely the same symptoms in both cases. I have again questioned these unfortunate creatures, and have been quite confounded and terrified to find them perfect heathens."

"It was, you see, very urgent to place them in your care. But to the subject of my visit, my dear mother: we have just learned the unexpected return of the soldier who brought these girls to France, and was thought to be absent

for some days; but he is in Paris, and, notwithstanding his age, a man of extraordinary boldness, enterprise and energy. Should he discover that the girls are here (which, however, is fortunately almost impossible), in his rage at seeing them removed from his impious influence, he would be capable of anything. Therefore let me entreat you, my dear mother, to redouble your precautions, that no one may effect an entrance by night. This quarter of the town is so deserted!"

"Be satisfied, my dear daughter; we are sufficiently guarded. Our porter and gardeners, all well armed, make a round every night on the side of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. The walls are high, and furnished with spikes at the more accessible places. But I thank you, my dear daughter, for having warned me. We will redouble our precautions."

"Particularly this night, my dear mother."

"Why so?"

"Because if this infernal soldier has the audacity to attempt such a thing, it will be this very night."

"How do you know, my dear daughter?"

"We have information which makes us certain of it," replied the princess, with a slight embarrassment, which did not escape the notice of the Superior, though she was too crafty and reserved to appear to see it; only she suspected that many things were concealed from her.

"This night, then," resumed Mother Sainte-Perpétue, "we will be more than ever on our guard. But as I have the pleasure of seeing you, my dear daughter, I will take the opportunity to say a word or two on the subject of that marriage we mentioned."

"Yes, my dear mother," said the princess, hastily, "for it is very important. The young Baron de Brisville is a man full of ardent devotion in these times of revolutionary impiety; he practises openly, and is able to render us great services. He is listened to in the Chamber, and does not want for a sort of aggressive and provoking eloquence; I know not any one whose tone is more insolent with regard to his faith, and the plan is a good one, for this cavalier and open manner of speaking of sacred things raises and excites the curiosity of the indifferent. Circumstances are happily such that he may show the most audacious violence towards our enemies, without the least danger to himself, which, of course, redoubles his ardor as a would-be martyr. In a word, he is altogether ours, and we, in return, must bring about this marriage. You know, besides, my dear mother, that he proposes to offer a donation of a hundred thousand

francs to St. Mary's the day he gains possession of the fortune of Mdlle. Baudricourt."

"I have never doubted the excellent intentions of M. de Brisville with regard to an institution which merits the sympathy of all pious persons," answered the Superior, discreetly; but I did not expect to meet with so many obstacles on the part of the young lady."

"How is that?"

"This girl, whom I always believed a most simple, submissive, timid, almost idiotic person—instead of being delighted with this proposal of marriage, asks time to consider!"

"It is really pitiable!"

"She opposes to me an inert resistance. It is in vain for me to speak severely, and tell her that, having no parents or friends, and being absolutely confided to my care, she ought to see with my eyes, hear with my ears, and, when I affirm that this union is suitable in all respects, give her adhesion to it without delay or reflection."

"No doubt. It would be impossible to speak more sensibly."

"She answers that she wishes to see M. de Brisville, and know his character before being engaged."

"It is absurd—since you undertake to answer for his morality, and esteem this a proper marriage."

"Therefore, I remarked to Mdlle. Baudricourt, this morning, that till now I had only employed gentle persuasion, but that, if she forced me to it, I should be obliged, in her own interest, to act with rigor, to conquer so much obstinacy—that I should have to separate her from her companions, and to confine her closely in a cell, until she made up her mind, after all, to consult her own happiness, and—marry an honorable man."

"And these menaces, my dear mother?"

"Will, I hope, have a good effect. She kept up a correspondence with an old school-friend in the country. I have put a stop to this, for it appeared to me dangerous. She is now under my sole influence, and I hope we shall attain our ends; but you see, my dear daughter, it is never without crosses and difficulties that we succeed in doing good!"

"And I feel certain that M. de Brisville will even go beyond his first promise, and I will pledge myself for him, that, should he marry Mdlle. Baudricourt——"

"You know, my dear daughter," said the superior, interrupting the princess, "that if I were myself concerned, I

would refuse everything; but to give to this institution is to give to Heaven, and I cannot prevent M. de Brisville from augmenting the amount of his good works. Then, you see, we are exposed to a sad disappointment."

"What is that, my dear mother?"

"The Sacred Heart Convent disputes an estate with us that would have suited us exactly. Really, some people are quite insatiable! I gave the lady superior my opinion upon it pretty freely."

"She told me as much," answered Madame de Saint-Dizier, "and laid the blame on the steward."

"Oh! so you see her, my dear daughter?" exclaimed the the superior, with an air of great surprise.

"I met her at the bishop's," answered Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a slight degree of hesitation, that Mother Sainte-Perpétue did not appear to notice.

"I really do not know," resumed the latter, "why our establishment should excite so violently the jealousy of the Sacred Heart. There is not an evil report that they have not spread with regard to St. Mary's Convent. Certain persons are always offended by the success of their neighbors!"

"Come, my dear mother," said the princess, in a conciliating tone, "we must hope that the donation of M. de Brisville will enable you to outbid the Sacred Heart. This marriage will have a double advantage, you see, my dear mother; it will place a large fortune at the disposal of a man who is devoted to us, and who will employ it as we wish; and it will also greatly increase the importance of his position as our defender, by the addition to his income of 100,000 francs a year. We shall have at length an organ worthy of our cause, and shall no longer be obliged to look for defenders amongst such people as that Dumoulin."

"There is great power and much learning in the writings of the man you name. It is the style of a Saint Bernard, in wrath at the impiety of the age."

"Alas, my dear mother! if you only knew what a strange Saint Bernard this Dumoulin is! But I will not offend your ears; all I can tell you is, that such defenders would compromise the most sacred cause. Adieu, my dear mother! pray redouble your precautions to-night—the return of this soldier is alarming."

"Be quite satisfied, my dear daughter! Oh! I forgot. Mdlle. Florine begged me to ask you a favor. It is to let her enter your service. You know the fidelity she dis-

played in watching your unfortunate niece; I think that, by rewarding her in this way, you will attach her to you completely, and I shall feel grateful on her account."

"If you interest yourself the least in the world in Florine, my dear mother, the thing is done. I will take her into my service. And now it strikes me, she may be more useful to me than I thought."

"A thousand thanks, my dear daughter, for such obliging attention to my request. I hope we shall soon meet again. The day after to-morrow, at two o'clock, we have a long conference with his Eminence and the Bishop; do not forget!"

"No, my dear mother; I shall take care to be exact. Only, pray, redouble your precautions to-night for fear of a great scandal!"

After respectfully kissing the hand of the superior, the princess went out by the great door, which led to an apartment opening on the principal staircase. Some minutes after, Florine entered the room by another way. The superior was seated and Florine approached her with timid humility.

"Did you meet the Princess de Saint-Dizier?" asked Mother Sainte Perpétue.

"No, mother; I was waiting in the passage, where the windows look out on the garden."

"The princess takes you into her service from to-day," said the superior.

Florine made a movement of sorrowful surprise, and exclaimed: "Me, mother! but——"

"I asked her in your name, and you have only to accept," answered the other imperiously.

"But, mother, I had entreated you——"

"I tell you, that you accept the offer," said the superior, in so firm and positive a tone that Florine cast down her eyes, and replied in a low voice: "I accept."

"It is in M. Rodin's name that I give you this order."

"I thought so, mother," replied Florine, sadly; "on what conditions am I to serve the princess?"

"On the same conditions as those on which you served her niece."

Florine shuddered and said: "I am, then, to make frequent secret reports with regard to the princess?"

"You will observe, you will remember, and you will give an account."

"Yes, my mother."

"You will above all direct your attention to the visits that the princess may receive from the lady superior of the Sacred Heart. You must try and listen—for we have to preserve the princess from evil influences."

"I will obey, my mother."

"You will also try and discover why two young orphans have been brought hither, and recommended to be severely treated, by Madame Grivois, the confidential waiting-woman of the princess."

"Yes, mother."

"Which must not prevent you from remembering anything else that may be worthy of remark. To-morrow I will give you particular instructions upon another subject."

"It is well, mother."

"If you conduct yourself in a satisfactory manner, and execute faithfully the instructions of which I speak, you will soon leave the princess to enter the service of a young bride; it will be an excellent and lasting situation—always on the same conditions. It is, therefore, perfectly understood that you have asked me to recommend you to Madame de Saint-Dizier."

"Yes, mother; I shall remember."

"Who is this deformed young girl that accompanies you?"

"A poor creature without any resource, very intelligent, and with an education above her class; she works at her needle, but is at present without employment, and reduced to the last extremity. I have made inquiries about her this morning; she has an excellent character."

"She is ugly and deformed, you say?"

"She has an interesting countenance, but she is deformed."

The superior appeared pleased at this information, and added, after a moment's reflection: "She appears intelligent?"

"Very intelligent."

"And is absolutely without resources?"

"Yes, without any."

"Is she pious?"

"She does not practice."

"No matter," said the superior to herself; "if she be intelligent, that will suffice." Then she resumed aloud. "Do you know if she is a good workwoman?"

"I believe so, mother."

"The superior rose, took a register from a shelf, appeared

to be looking into it attentively for some time, and then said, as she replaced it: "Fetch in this young girl, and go and wait for me in the press-room."

"Deformed—intelligent—clever at her needle," said the superior, reflecting; "she will excite no suspicion. We must see."

In about a minute, Florine returned with Mother Bunch, whom she introduced to the superior, and then discreetly withdrew. The young sempstress was agitated, trembling, and much troubled, for she could, as it were, hardly believe a discovery which she had chanced to make during Florine's absence. It was not without a vague sense of terror that the hunchback remained alone with the lady superior.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEMPTATION.

This was the cause of Mother Bunch's emotion. Florine, when she went to see the superior, had left the young sempstress in a passage supplied with benches, and forming a sort of ante-chamber on the first story. Being alone, the girl had mechanically approached a window which looked upon the convent garden, shut in by a half-demolished wall, and terminating at one end in an open paling. This wall was connected with a chapel that was still building, and bordered on the garden of a neighboring house. The sewing-girl, at one of the windows on the ground floor of this house—a grated window, still more remarkable by the sort of tent-like awning above it—beheld a young female, with her eyes fixed upon the convent, making signs with her hand, at once encouraging and affectionate. From the window where she stood, Mother Bunch could not see to whom these signs were addressed; but she admired the rare beauty of the telegrapher, the brilliancy of her complexion, the shining blackness of her large eyes, the sweet and benevolent smile which lingered on her lips. There was, no doubt, some answer to her graceful and expressive pantomime, for, by a movement full of elegance, the girl laid her left hand on her bosom, and waved her right, which seemed to indicate that her heart flew towards the place on which she kept her eyes. One faint sunbeam, piercing the clouds, came at this moment to play with the tresses of the pale countenance, which, now held close to the bars of the

window, was suddenly, as it were, illuminated by the dazzling reflection of her splendid golden hair. At sight of that charming face, set in its admirable frame of red curls, Mother Bunch started involuntarily; the thought of Mdlle. de Cardoville crossed her mind, and she felt persuaded (nor was she, indeed, mistaken), that the protectress of Agricola was before her. On thus beholding, in that gloomy asylum, this young lady, so marvellously beautiful, and remembering the delicate kindness with which a few days before she had received Agricola in her luxurious little palace of dazzling splendor, the work-girl felt her heart sink within her. She believed Adrienne insane; and yet, as she looked attentively at her, it seemed as if intelligence and grace animated that adorable countenance. Suddenly, Mdlle. de Cardoville laid her fingers upon her lips, blew a couple of kisses in the direction towards which she had been looking, and all at once disappeared. Reflecting upon the important revelations which Agricola had to make to Mdlle. de Cardoville, Mother Bunch regretted bitterly that she had no means of approaching her; for she felt sure that, if the young lady were mad, the present was a lucid interval. She was yet absorbed in these uneasy reflections, when she saw Florine return, accompanied by one of the nuns. Mother Bunch was obliged, therefore, to keep silence with regard to the discovery she had made, and soon after she found herself in the superior's presence. This latter, after a rapid and searching examination of the countenance of the young workwoman, judged her appearance so timid, gentle and honest, that she thought she might repose full confidence in the information given by Florine.

"My dear daughter," said Mother Sainte-Perpétue, in an affectionate voice, "Florine has told me in what a cruel situation you are placed. Is it true that you are entirely without work?"

"Alas! yes, madame."

"Call me mother, my dear daughter; that name is dearer to me, and it is the rule of our house. I need not ask you, what are your principles?"

"I have always lived honestly by my labor, mother," answered the girl, with a simplicity at once dignified and modest.

"I believe you, my dear daughter, and I have good reasons for so doing. We must thank the Lord, who has delivered you from temptation; but tell me—are you clever at your trade?"

"I do my best, mother, and have always satisfied my employers. If you please to try me, you will be able to judge."

"Your affirmation is sufficient, my dear daughter. You prefer, I think, to go out by the day?"

"Mdlle. Florine told me, mother, that I could not have work at home."

"Why, no—not for the present, my child. If hereafter an opportunity should offer, I will think of it. Just now I have this to propose to you. A very respectable old lady has asked me to recommend to her a needle-woman by the day; introduced by me, you will certainly suit her. The institution will undertake to clothe you becomingly, and this advance we shall retain by degrees out of your wages, for you will look to us for payment. We propose to give you two francs a day; does that appear to you sufficient?"

"Oh, mother! it is much more than I could have expected."

"You will, moreover, only be occupied from nine o'clock in the morning till six in the evening; you will thus have still some off hours, of which you might make use. You see, the situation is not a hard one."

"Oh! quite the contrary, mother."

"I must tell you, first of all, with whom the institution intends to place you. It is a widow lady, named Mme. de Brémont, a person of the most steadfast piety. In her house, I hope, you will meet with none but excellent examples. If it should be otherwise, you can come and inform me."

"How so, mother?" said the sewing-girl, with surprise.

"Listen to me, my dear daughter," said Mother Sainte-Perpétue, in a tone ever more and more affectionate; "the institution of St. Mary has a double end in view. You will perfectly understand that, if it is our duty to give to masters and mistresses every possible security as to the morality of the persons that we place in their families, we are likewise bound to give to the persons that we so place out every possible security as to the morality of their employers."

"Nothing can be more just and of a wiser foresight, mother."

"Naturally, my dear daughter; for even as a servant of bad morals may cause the utmost trouble in a respectable family, so the bad conduct of a master or mistress may have the most baneful influence on the persons who serve them, or who come to work in their houses. Now, it is to

offer a mutual guarantee to good masters and honest servants, that we have founded this institution."

"Oh, madame!" cried Mother Bunch, with simplicity; "such designs merit the thanks and blessings of every one."

"And blessings do not fail us, my dear daughter, because we perform our promises. Thus, an interesting workwoman—such as you, for example—is placed with persons that we suppose irreproachable. Should she, however, perceive, on the part of her employers, or on that of the persons who frequent the house, any irregularity of morals, any tendency to what would offend her modesty, or shock her religious principles, she should immediately give us a detailed account of the circumstances that have caused her alarm. Nothing can be more proper—don't you think so?"

"Yes, mother," answered Mother Bunch, timidly, for she began to find this provision somewhat singular.

"Then, resumed the Superior, "if the case appears a serious one, we exhort our befriended one to observe what passes more attentively, so as to convince herself whether she had really reason to be alarmed. She makes a new report to us, and should it confirm our first fears, faithful to our pious guardianship, we withdraw her instantly from the house. Moreover, as the majority of our young people, notwithstanding their innocence and virtue, have not always sufficient experience to distinguish what may be injurious to their soul's health, we think it greatly to their interest that they should confide to us once a week, as a child would to her mother, either in person or by letter, whatever has chanced to occur in the house in which we have placed them. Then we can judge for them, whether to withdraw them or not. We have already about a hundred persons, companions to ladies, young women in shops, servants, and needlewomen by the day, whom we have placed in a great number of families, and, for the interest of all, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves on this mode of proceeding. You understand me, do you not, my dear daughter?"

"Yes—yes, mother," said the sempstress, more and more embarrassed. She had too much uprightness and sagacity not to perceive that this plan of mutually insuring the morality of masters and servants resembled a vast spy-system, brought home to the domestic hearth, and carried on by the members of the institution almost without their knowledge, for it would have been difficult to disguise more skilfully the employment for which they were trained.

"If I have entered into these long details, my dear daugh-

ter," resumed Mother Sainte-Perpétue, taking the hearer's silence for consent, "it is that you may not suppose yourself obliged to remain in the house in question, if, against our expectation, you should not find there holy and pious examples. I believe Mme. de Brémont's house to be a pure and godly place; only I have heard (though I will not believe it) that Mme. de Brémont's daughter, Mme. de Noisy, who has lately come to reside with her, is not so exemplary in her conduct as could be desired, that she does not fulfil regularly her religious duties, and that, during the absence of her husband, who is now in America, she receives visits, unfortunately too frequent, from one M. Hardy, a rich manufacturer."

At the name of Agricola's master, Mother Bunch could not suppress a movement of surprise, and also blushed slightly. The superior naturally mistook this surprise and confusion for a proof of the modest susceptibility of the young semptress, and added: "I have told you all this, my dear daughter, that you might be on your guard. I have even mentioned reports that I believe to be completely erroneous, for the daughter of Mme. de Brémont has always had such good examples before her that she cannot have so forgotten them. But, being in the house from morning to night, you will be able, better than any one, to discover if these reports have any foundation in truth. Should it unfortunately so turn out, my dear daughter, you would come and confide to me all the circumstances that have led you to such a conclusion; and, should I then agree in your opinion, I would withdraw you instantly from the house—for the piety of the mother would not compensate sufficiently for the deplorable example of the daughter's conduct. For, as soon as you form part of the institution, I am responsible for your salvation, and, in case your delicacy should oblige you to leave Mme. de Brémont's, as you might be some time without employment, the institution will allow you, if satisfied with your zeal and conduct, one franc a day till we could find you another place. You see, my dear daughter, that you have everything to gain with us. It is therefore agreed that the day after to-morrow you go to Mme. de Brémont's." Mother Bunch found herself in a very hard position. Sometimes she thought that her first suspicions were confirmed, and, notwithstanding her timidity, her pride felt hurt at the supposition that, because they knew her poor, they should believe her capable of selling herself as a spy for the sake of high wages. Sometimes, on the contrary, her natural delicacy revolted at the idea that a

woman of the age and condition of the superior could descend to make a proposition so disgraceful both to the accepter and the proposer, and she reproached herself with her first doubts and asked herself if the Superior had not wished to try her, before employing her, to see if her probity would enable her to resist a comparatively brilliant offer. Mother Bunch was naturally so inclined to think well of every one, that she made up her mind to this last conclusion, saying to herself, that if, after all, she were deceived, it would be the least offensive mode of refusing these unworthy offers. With a movement, exempt from all haughtiness, but expressive of natural dignity, the young workwoman raised her head, which she had hitherto held humbly cast down, looked the superior full in the face, that the latter might read in her countenance the sincerity of her words, and said to her in a slightly agitated voice, forgetting this time to call her "mother." "Ah, madame! I cannot blame you for exposing me to such a trial. You see that I am very poor, and I have yet done nothing to command your confidence. But, believe me, poor as I am, I would never stoop to so despicable an action as that which you have thought fit to propose to me, no doubt to assure yourself, by my refusal, that I am worthy of your kindness. No, no, madame—I could never bring myself to be a spy at any price."

She pronounced these last words with so much animation that her cheeks became slightly flushed. The superior had too much tact and experience not to perceive the sincerity of the words. Thinking herself lucky that the young girl should put this construction upon the affair, she smiled upon her affectionately, and stretched out her arms to her, saying: "It is well, my dear daughter. Come and embrace me!"

"Mother—I am really confused—with so much kindness——"

"No—you deserve it—your words are so full of truth and honesty. Only be persuaded that I have not put you to any trial, because there is no resemblance between the act of a spy and the marks of filial confidence that we require of our members for the sake of watching over their morals. But certain persons—I see you are of the number, my dear daughter—have such fixed principles, and so mature a judgment, that they can do without our advice and guardianship, and can appreciate themselves whatever might be dangerous to their salvation. I will therefore leave the entire responsibility to yourself, and only ask you for such communications as you may think proper to make."

"Oh, madame! how good you are!" said poor Mother Bunch, for she was not aware of the thousand devices of the monastic spirit, and thought herself already sure of gaining just wages honorably.

"It is not goodness—but justice!" answered Mother Saint-Perpétue, whose tone was becoming more and more affectionate. "Too much tenderness cannot be shown to pious young women like you, whom poverty has only purified, because they have always faithfully observed the divine laws."

"Mother——"

"One last question, my child! how many times a month do you approach the Lord's table?"

"Madame," replied the hunchback, "I have not taken the sacrament since my first communion, eight years ago. I am hardly able, by working every day, and all day long, to earn my bread. I have no time——"

"Gracious heaven!" cried the superior, interrupting, and clasping her hands with all the signs of painful astonishment. "Is it possible? you do not practise?"

"Alas, madame! I tell you that I have no time," answered Mother Bunch, looking disconcertedly at Mother Saint-Perpétue.

"I am grieved, my dear daughter," said the latter sorrowfully, after a moment's silence, "but I told you that, as we place our friends in none but pious houses, so we are asked to recommend none but pious persons, who practise their religious duties. It is one of the indispensable conditions of our institution. It will therefore, to my great regret, be impossible for me to employ you as I had hoped. If, hereafter, you should renounce your present indifference to those duties, we will then see."

"Madame," said Mother Bunch, her heart swollen with tears for she was thus forced to abandon a cheering hope, "I beg pardon for having detained you so long—for nothing."

"It is I, my dear daughter, who regret not to be able to attach you to the institution; but I am not altogether hopeless, that a person, already so worthy of interest, will one day deserve by her piety the lasting support of religious people. Adieu, my dear daughter! go in peace, and may God be merciful to you, until the day that you return with your whole heart to Him!"

So saying, the superior rose, and conducted her visitor to the door, with all the forms of the most maternal kindness. At the moment she crossed the threshold, she said to her.

"Follow the passage, go down a few steps, and knock at the second door on the right hand. It is the press-room, and there you will find Florine. She will show you the way out. Adieu, my dear daughter!"

As soon as Mother Bunch had left the presence of the Superior, her tears, until now restrained, gushed forth abundantly. Not wishing to appear before Florine and the nuns in this state, she stopped a moment at one of the windows to dry her eyes. As she looked mechanically towards the windows of the next house, where she fancied she had seen Adrienne de Cardoville, she beheld the latter come from a door in the building, and advance rapidly towards the open paling that separated the two gardens. At the same instant, and to her great astonishment, Mother Bunch saw one of the two sisters whose disappearance had caused the despair of Dagobert, with pale and dejected countenance, approach the fence that separated her from Mdlle. de Cardoville, trembling with fear and anxiety, as though she dreaded to be discovered.

CHAPTER VIII.

MOTHER BUNCH AND MDLLE. DE CARDOVILLE.

Agitated, attentive, uneasy, leaning from one of the convent-windows, the work-girl followed with her eyes the movements of Mdlle. de Cardoville and Rose Simon, whom she so little expected to find together in such a place. The orphan, approaching close to the fence, which separated the nunnery-garden from that of Dr. Baleinier's asylum, spoke a few words to Adrienne, whose features at once expressed astonishment, indignation, and pity. At this juncture, a nun came running, and looking right and left, as though anxiously seeking for some one; then, perceiving Rose, who timidly pressed close to the paling, she seized her by the arm, and seemed to scold her severely, and notwithstanding some energetic words addressed to her by Mdlle. de Cardoville, she hastily carried off the orphan, who, with weeping eyes, turned several times to look back at Adrienne; whilst the latter, after showing the interest she took in her by expressive gestures, turned away suddenly, as if to conceal her tears.

The passage in which the witness stood, during this

touching scene, was situated on the first story. The thought immediately occurred to the sempstress, to go down to the ground-floor, and try to get into the garden, so that she might have an opportunity of speaking to the fair girl with the golden hair, and ascertaining if it were really Mdlle. de Cardoville, to whom, if she found her in a lucid interval, she might say that Agricola had things of the greatest importance to communicate; but that he did not know how to inform her of them. The day was advancing, the sun was on its decline, and fearing that Florine would be tired of waiting for her, Mother Bunch made haste to act; with a light step, listening anxiously as she went, she reached the end of the passage, where three or four stairs led down to the landing-place of the press-room, and then formed a spiral descent to the ground-floor. Hearing voices in the press-room, the sempstress hastened down the stairs, and found herself in a long passage, in the centre of which was a glass-door, opening on that part of the garden reserved for the superior. A path, bordered by a high box-hedge, sheltered her from the gaze of curious eyes, and she crept along it, till she reached the open paling, which, at this spot, separated the convent-garden from that of Dr. Baleinier's asylum. She saw Mdlle. de Cardoville a few steps from her, seated, and with her arm resting upon a rustic bench. The firmness of Adrienne's character had for a moment been shaken by fatigue, astonishment, fright, despair, on the terrible night when she had been taken to the asylum by Dr. Baleinier; and the latter, taking a diabolical advantage of her weakness and despondency, had succeeded for a moment in making her doubt of her own sanity. But the calm, which necessarily follows the most painful and violent emotions, combined with the reflection and reasoning of a clear and subtle intellect, soon convinced Adrienne of the groundlessness of the fears inspired by the crafty doctor. She no longer believed that it could even be a mistake on the part of the man of science. She saw clearly in the conduct of this man, in which detestable hypocrisy was united with rare audacity, and both served by a skill no less remarkable, that M. Baleinier was, in fact, the blind instrument of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. From that moment, she remained silent and calm, but full of dignity; not a complaint, not a reproach was allowed to pass her lips. She waited. Yet, though they left her at liberty to walk about (carefully depriving her of all means of communicating with any one beyond the walls), Adrienne's situation was harsh and painful, particu-

larly for her, who so loved to be surrounded by pleasant and harmonious objects. She felt, however, that this situation could not last long. She did not thoroughly understand the penetration and action of the laws; but her good sense taught her, that a confinement of a few days under the plea of some appearances of insanity, more or less plausible in themselves, might be attempted, and even executed with impunity; but that it could not be prolonged beyond certain limits, because, after all, a young lady of her rank in society could not disappear suddenly from the world, without inquiries being made on the subject—and the pretence of a sudden attack of madness would lead to a serious investigation. Whether true or false, this conviction had restored Adrienne to her accustomed elasticity and energy of character. And yet she sometimes in vain asked herself the cause of this attempt on her liberty. She knew too well the Princess de Saint-Dizier, to believe her capable of acting in this way, without a certain end in view, and merely for the purpose of inflicting a momentary pang. In this, Mdlle. de Cardoville was not deceived: Father d'Aigrigny and the princess were both persuaded, that Adrienne, better informed than she wished to acknowledge, knew how important it was for her to find herself in the house in the Rue Saint-François on the 13th of February, and was determined to maintain her rights. In shutting up Adrienne as mad, it was intended to strike a fatal blow at her future prospects; but this last precaution was useless, for Adrienne, though upon the true scent of the family-secret they had wished to conceal from her, had not yet entirely penetrated its meaning, for want of certain documents, which had been lost or hidden.

Whatever had been the motives for the odious conduct of Mdlle. de Cardoville's enemies, she was not the less disgusted at it. No one could be more free from hatred or revenge, than was this generous young girl, but when she thought of all the sufferings which the Princess de Saint-Dizier, Abbé d'Aigrigny, and Dr. Baleinier had occasioned her, she promised herself, not reprisals, but a striking reparation. If it were refused her, she was resolved to combat—without truce or rest, this combination of craft, hypocrisy, and cruelty, not from resentment for what she had endured, but to preserve from the same torments other innocent victims, who might not, like her, be able to struggle and defend themselves. Adrienne, still under the painful impression which had been caused by her interview with Rose Simon, was leaning against one of the sides of the rustic bench on which

she was seated, and held her left hand over her eyes. She had laid down her bonnet beside her, and the inclined position of her head brought the long golden curls over her fair, shining cheeks. In this recumbent attitude, so full of careless grace, the charming proportions of her figure were seen to advantage beneath a watered green dress, while a broad collar, fastened with a rose-colored satin bow, and fine lace cuffs, prevented too strong a contrast between the hue of her dress and the dazzling whiteness of the swan-like neck and Raphaelesque hands, imperceptibly veined with tiny azure lines. Over the high and well-formed instep, were crossed the delicate strings of a little, black satin shoe—for Dr. Baleinier had allowed her to dress herself with her usual taste, and elegance of costume was not with Adrienne a mark of coquetry, but of duty towards herself, because she had been made so beautiful. At sight of this young lady, whose dress and appearance she admired in all simplicity, without any envious or bitter comparison with her own poor clothes and deformity of person, Mother Bunch said immediately to herself, with the good sense and sagacity peculiar to her, that it was strange a mad woman should dress so sanely and gracefully. It was therefore with a mixture of surprise and emotion that she approached the fence which separated her from Adrienne—reflecting, however, that the unfortunate girl might still be insane, and that this might turn out to be merely a lucid interval. And now, with a timid voice, but loud enough to be heard, Mother Bunch, in order to assure herself of Adrienne's identity, said, whilst her heart beat fast: "Mdlle. de Cardoville!"

"Who calls me?" said Adrienne. On hastily raising her head, and perceiving the hunchback, she could not suppress a slight cry of surprise, almost fright. For indeed this poor creature, pale, deformed, miserably clad, thus appearing suddenly before her, must have inspired Mdlle. de Cardoville, so passionately fond of grace and beauty, with a feeling of repugnance, if not of terror—and these two sentiments were both visible in her expressive countenance.

The other did not perceive the impression she had made. Motionless, with her eyes fixed, and her hands clasped in a sort of adoring admiration, she gazed on the dazzling beauty of Adrienne, whom she had only half seen through the grated window. All that Agricola had told her of the charms of his protectress, appeared to her a thousand times below the reality; and never, even in her secret poetic visions, had she dreamed of such rare perfection. Thus, by a singular con-

trast, a feeling of mutual surprise came over these two girls —extreme types of deformity and beauty, wealth and wretchedness. After rendering, as it were, this involuntary homage to Adrienne, Mother Bunch advanced another step towards the fence.

"What do you want?" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, rising with a sentiment of repugnance, which could not escape the work-girl's notice; accordingly, she held down her head timidly, and said in a soft voice: "I beg your pardon madame, to appear so suddenly before you. But moments are precious, I come from Agricola."

As she pronounced these words, the sempstress raised her eyes anxiously, fearing that Mdlle. de Cardoville might have forgotten the name of the workman. But, to her great surprise and joy, the fears of Adrienne seemed to diminish at the name of Agricola, and approaching the fence, she looked at the speaker with benevolent curiosity.

"You come from M. Agricola Baudoin?" said she. "Who are you?"

"His adopted sister, madame—a poor needlewoman, who lives in the same house."

Adrienne appeared to collect her thoughts, and said, smiling kindly, after a moment's silence: "It was you then, who persuaded M. Agricola to apply to me to procure him bail?"

"Oh, madame, do you remember——"

"I never forget anything that is generous and noble. M. Agricola was much affected when he spoke of your devotion. I remember it well; it would be strange if I did not. But how came you here, in this convent?"

"They told me that I should perhaps be able to get some occupation here, as I am out of work. Unfortunately, I have been refused by the lady superior."

"And how did you recognize me?"

"By your great beauty, madame, of which Agricola had told me."

"Or rather by this," said Adrienne, smiling, as she lifted, with the tips of her rosy fingers, one end of a long, silky ringlet of golden hair.

"You must pardon Agricola, madame," said the sewing girl, with one of those half smiles, which rarely settled on her lips: "he is a poet, and omitted no single perfection in the respectful and admiring description which he gave of his protectress."

"And what induced you to come and speak to me?"

"The hope of being useful to you, madame. You received

Agricola with so much goodness, that I have ventured to go shares in his gratitude."

"You may well venture to do so, my dear girl," said Adrienne, with ineffable grace; "until now, unfortunately, I have only been able to serve your adopted brother by intention."

As they exchanged these words, Adrienne and Mother Bunch looked at each other with increasing surprise. The latter was, first of all, astonished that a person who passed for mad should express herself as Adrienne did; next, she was amazed at the ease and freedom with which she herself answered the questions of Mdlle. de Cardoville—not knowing that the latter was endowed with the precious privilege of lofty and benevolent natures, to draw out from those who approached her whatever sympathized with herself. On her side, Mdlle. de Cardoville was deeply moved and astonished to hear this young, low-born girl, dressed almost like a beggar, express herself in terms selected with so much propriety. The more she looked at her, the more the feeling of repugnance she at first experienced wore off, and was at length converted into quite the opposite sentiment. With that rapid and minute power of observation natural to women, she remarked beneath the black crape of Mother Bunch's cap, the smoothness and brilliancy of the fair, chestnut hair. She remarked, too, the whiteness of the long, thin hand, though it displayed itself at the end of a patched and tattered sleeve—an infallible proof that care, and cleanliness, and self-respect were at least struggling against symptoms of fearful distress. Adrienne discovered, also, in the pale and melancholy features, in the expression of the blue eyes, at once intelligent, mild and timid, a soft and modest dignity, which made one forget the deformed figure. Adrienne loved physical beauty, and admired it passionately, but she had too superior a mind, too noble a soul, too sensitive a heart, not to know how to appreciate moral beauty, even when it beamed from a humble and suffering countenance. Only, this kind of appreciation was new to Mdlle. de Cardoville; until now, her large fortune and elegant habits had kept her at a distance from persons of Mother Bunch's class. After a short silence, during which the fair patrician and the poor work-girl had closely examined each other, Adrienne said to the other: "It is easy, I think, to explain the cause of our mutual astonishment. You have, no doubt, discovered that I speak pretty reasonably for a mad woman—if they have told you I am one. And I,"

added Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a tone of respectful commiseration, "find that the delicacy of your language and manners so singularly contrast with the position in which you appear to be, that my surprise must be even greater than yours."

"Ah, madame!" cried Mother Bunch, with a welling forth of such deep and sincere joy that the tears started to her eyes; "is it true?—they have deceived me—you are not mad! Just now, when I beheld you so kind and beautiful, when I heard the sweet tone of your voice, I could not believe that such a misfortune had happened to you. But, alas! how is it then, madame, that you are in this place?"

"Poor child!" said Adrienne, touched by the affectionate interest of this excellent creature; "and how is it that you, with such a heart and head, should be in such distress? But be satisfied! I shall not always be here—and that will suffice to tell you, that we shall both resume the place which becomes us. Believe me, I shall never forget how, in spite of the painful ideas which must needs occupy your mind, on seeing yourself deprived of work—your only resource—you have still thought of coming to me, and of trying to serve me. You may, indeed, be eminently useful to me, and I am delighted at it, for then I shall owe you much—and you shall see how I will take advantage of my gratitude!" said Adrienne, with a sweet smile. "But," resumed she, "before talking of myself, let us think of others. Is your adopted brother still in prison?"

"By this time, madame, I hope he has obtained his freedom; thanks to the generosity of one of his comrades. His father went yesterday to offer bail for him, and they promised that he should be released to-day. But, from his prison, he wrote to me, that he had something of importance to reveal to you."

"To me?"

"Yes, madame. Should Agricola be released immediately, by what means can he communicate with you?"

"He has secrets to tell me!" resumed Mdlle. de Cardoville, with an air of thoughtful surprise. "I seek in vain to imagine what they can be; but so long as I am confined in this house, and secluded from every one, M. Agricola must not think of addressing himself directly or indirectly to me. He must wait till I am at liberty; but that is not all, he must deliver from that convent two poor children, who are much more to be pitied than I am. The daughters of Marshal Simon are detained here against their will."

"You know their name, madame?"

"When M. Agricola informed me of their arrival in Paris, he told me they were fifteen years old, and that they resembled each other exactly—so that, the day before yesterday, when I took my accustomed walk, and observed two poor little weeping faces come close to the windows of their separate cells, one on the ground floor, the other on the first story a secret presentiment told me that I saw in them the orphans of whom M. Agricola had spoken, and in whom I already took a lively interest, as being my relations."

"They are your relations, madame, then?"

"Yes, certainly. So, not being able to do more, I tried to express by signs how much I felt for them. Their tears, and the sadness of their charming faces, sufficiently told me that they were prisoners in the convent, as I am myself in this house."

"Oh! I understand, madame—the victim of the animosity of your family?"

"Whatever may be my fate, I am much less to be pitied than these two children, whose despair is really alarming. Their separation is what chiefly oppresses them. By some words that one of them just now said to me, I see that they are, like me, the victims of an odious machination. But thanks to you, it will be possible to save them. Since I have been in this house I have had no communication with any one; they have not allowed me pen or paper, so it is impossible to write. Now listen to me attentively, and we shall be able to defeat an odious persecution."

"Oh, speak! speak, madame!"

"The soldier, who brought these orphans to France, the father of M. Agricola, is still in town?"

"Yes, madame. Oh! if you only knew his fury, his despair, when, on his return home, he no longer found the children that a dying mother had confided to him!"

"He must take care not to act with the least violence. It would ruin all. Take this ring," said Adrienne, drawing it from her finger, "and give it to him. He must go instantly—are you sure that you can remember a name and address?"

"Oh! yes, madame. Be satisfied on that point. Agricola only mentioned your name once, and I have not forgotten it. There is a memory of the heart."

"I perceive it, my dear girl. Remember, then, the name of the Count de Montbron."

"The Count de Montbron—I shall not forget."

"He is one of my good old friends, and lives on the Place Vendôme, No. 7."

"Place Vendôme, No. 7—I shall remember."

"M. Agricola's father must go to him this evening, and, if he is not at home, wait for his coming in. He must ask to speak to him, as if from me, and send him this ring as a proof of what he says. Once with him, he must tell him all—the abduction of the girls, the name of the convent where they are confined, and my own detention as a lunatic in the asylum of Dr. Baleinier. Truth has an accent of its own, which M. de Montbron will recognize. He is a man of much experience and judgment, and possessed of great influence. He will immediately take the necessary steps, and to-morrow, or the day after, these poor orphans and myself will be restored to liberty—all thanks to you! But moments are precious; we might be discovered; make haste, dear child!"

At the moment of drawing back, Adrienne said to Mother Bunch, with so sweet a smile and affectionate a tone, that it was impossible not to believe her sincere: "M. Agricola told me that I had a heart like yours. I now understand how honorable, how flattering those words were for me. Pray, give me your hand!" added Mdlle. de Cardoville, whose eyes were filling with tears; and, passing her beautiful hand through an opening in the fence, she offered it to the other. The words and the gesture of the fair patrician were full of so much real cordiality, that the sempstress, with no false shame, placed tremblingly her own poor thin hand in Adrienne's, while the latter, with a feeling of pious respect, lifted it spontaneously to her lips, and said: "Since I cannot embrace you as my sister, let me at least kiss this hand, ennobled by labor!"

Suddenly, footsteps were heard in the garden of Dr. Baleinier; Adrienne withdrew abruptly, and disappeared behind some trees, saying: Courage, memory, and hope!"

All this had passed so rapidly that the young workwoman had no time to speak or move; tears, sweet tears, flowed abundantly down her pale cheeks. For a young lady, like Adrienne de Cardoville, to treat her as a sister, to kiss her hand, to tell her that she was proud to resemble her in heart—her, a poor creature, vegetating in the lowest abyss of misery—was to show a spirit of fraternal equality, divine, as the gospel words.

There are words and impressions which make a noble soul forget years of suffering, and which, as by a sudden flash, reveal to it something of its own worth and grandeur. Thus it was with the hunchback. Thanks to this generous speech, she was for a moment conscious of her own value.

And though this feeling was rapid as it was ineffable, she clasped her hands and raised her eyes to heaven with an expression of fervent gratitude; for, if the poor sempstress did not practise, to use the jargon of ultramontane cant, no one was more richly endowed with that deep religious sentiment, which is to mere dogmas what the immensity of the starry heaven is to the vaulted roof of a church.

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Five minutes after quitting Mdlle. de Cardoville, Mother Bunch, having left the garden without being perceived, re-ascended to the first story, and knocked gently at the door of the press-room. A sister came to open the door to her.

"Is not Mdlle. Florine, with whom I came, still here, sister?" asked the needlewoman.

"She could not wait for you any longer. No doubt, you have come from our mother the superior?"

"Yes, yes, sister," answered the sempstress, casting down her eyes; "would you have the goodness to show me the way out?"

"Come with me."

The sewing-girl followed the nun, trembling at every step lest she should meet the superior, who would naturally have inquired the cause of her long stay in the convent.

At length the inner gate closed upon Mother Bunch. Passing rapidly across the vast court-yard and approaching the porter's lodge, to ask him to let her out, she heard these words pronounced in a gruff voice: "It seems, old Jerome, that we are to be doubly on our guard to-night. Well, I shall put two extra balls in my gun. The superior says we are to make two rounds instead of one."

"I want no gun, Nicholas," said the other voice; "I have my sharp scythe, a true gardener's weapon—and none the worse for that."

Feeling an involuntary uneasiness at these words, which she had heard by mere chance, Mother Bunch approached the porter's lodge, and asked him to open the outer gate.

"Where do you come from," challenged the porter, leaning half-way out of his lodge, with a double barrelled gun, which he was occupied in loading, in his hand, and at the same time examining the sempstress with a suspicious air.

"I come from speaking to the superior," answered Mother Bunch timidly.

"Is that true?" said Nicholas roughly. "You look like a sanctified scarecrow. Never mind. Make haste and cut!"

The gate opened, and Mother Bunch went out. Hardly had she gone a few steps in the street, when, to her great surprise, she saw the dog Spoil-sport run up to her, and his master, Dagobert, a little way behind him, arriving also with precipitation. She was hastening to meet the soldier, when a full, sonorous voice exclaimed from a little distance: "Oh, my good sister!" which caused the girl to turn round. From the opposite side to that whence Dagobert was coming, she saw Agricola hurrying towards the spot.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ENCOUNTERS.

At the sight of Dagobert and Agricola, Mother Bunch remained motionless with surprise, a few steps from the convent-gate. The soldier had not yet perceived the sempstress. He advanced rapidly, following the dog, who though lean, half-starved, rough-coated, and dirty, seemed to frisk with pleasure, as he turned his intelligent face towards his master, to whom he had gone back, after caressing Mother Bunch.

"Yes, yes; I understand you, old fellow!" said the soldier, with emotion. "You are more faithful than I was; you did not leave the dear children for a minute. Yes; you followed them, and watched day and night, without food, at the door of the house to which they were taken—and, at length, weary of waiting to see them come forth, ran home to fetch me. Yes; whilst I was giving way to despair, like a furious madman, you were doing what I ought to have done—discovering their retreat. What does it all prove? Why, that beasts are better than men—which is well known. Well, at length I shall see them again. When I think that tomorrow is the 13th, and that without you, my old Spoil-sport, all would be lost—it makes me shudder. But I say, shall we soon be there? What a deserted quarter! and night coming on!"

Dagobert had held this discourse to Spoil-sport, as he walked along following the good dog, who kept on at a rapid pace. Suddenly, seeing the faithful animal start aside with a bound, he raised his eyes, and perceived the dog frisking about the hunchback and Agricola, who had just met at a little distance from the convent-gate.

"Mother Bunch?" exclaimed both father and son, as they approached the young workwoman, and lookek at her with extreme surprise.

"There is good hope, M. Dagobert," said she with inexpressible joy. "Rose and Blanche are found!" Then, turning towards the smith, she added, "There is good hope, Agricola · Mdlle. de Cardoville is not mad. I have just seen her."

"She is not mad? what happiness!" exclaimed the smith.

"The children!" cried Dagobert, trembling with emotion, as he took the work-girl's hands in his own. "You have seen them?"

"Yes; just now—very sad—very unhappy—but I was not able to speak to them."

"Oh!" said Dagobert, stopping as if suffocated by the news, and pressing his hands on his bosom; "I never thought that my old heart could beat so!—And yet, thanks to my dog, I almost expected what has taken place. Anyhow, I am quite dizzy with joy."

"Well, father, it's a good day," said Agricola, looking gratefully at the girl.

"Kiss me, my dear child!" added the soldier, as he pressed Mother Bunch affectionately in his arms; then, full of impatience, he added: "Come, let us go and fetch the children."

"Ah, my good sister!" said Agricola, deeply moved; "you will restore peace, perhaps life, to my father—and Mdlle. de Cardoville—but how do you know?"

"A mere chance. And how did you come here?"

"Spoil-sport stops and barks," cried Dagobert, who had already made several steps in advance.

Indeed the dog, who was as impatient as his master to see the orphans, and far better informed as to the place of their retreat, had posted himself at the convent gate, and was beginning to bark, to attract the attention of Dagobert. Understanding his dog, the latter said to the hunchback, as he pointed in that direction with his finger: "The children are there?"

"Yes, M. Dagobert."

"I was sure of it. Good dog!—Oh, yes! beasts are better than men—except you, my dear girl, who are better than either man or beast. But my poor children! I shall see them, I shall have them once more!"

So saying, Dagobert, in spite of his age, began to run very fast towards Spoil-sport. "Agricola," cried Mother Bunch,

"prevent thy father from knocking at that door. He would ruin all."

In two strides, the smith had reached his father, just as the latter was raising his hand to the knocker. "Stop, father!" cried the smith, as he seized Dagobert by the arm.

"What the devil is it now?"

"Mother Bunch says that to knock would ruin all."

"How so?"

"She will explain it to you." Although not so nimble as Agricola, Mother Bunch soon came up, and said to the soldier: "M. Dagobert, do not let us remain before this gate. They might open it, and see us; and that would excite suspicion. Let us rather go away——"

"Suspicion!" cried the veteran, much surprised, but without moving from the gate; "what suspicion?"

"I conjure you, do not remain there!" said Mother Bunch, with so much earnestness, that Agricola joined her, and said to his father: "Since sister wishes it, father, she has some reason for it. The Boulevard de l'Hôpital is a few steps from here; nobody passes that way; we can talk there without being interrupted."

"Devil take me if I understand a word of all this!" cried Dagobert, without moving from his post. "The children are here, and I will fetch them away with me. It is an affair of ten minutes."

"Do not think that, M. Dagobert," said Mother Bunch. "It is much more difficult than you imagine. But come!—come!—I can hear them talk in the court-yard."

In fact, the sound of voices was now distinctly audible. "Come father!" said Agricola, forcing away the soldier, almost in spite of himself. Spoil-sport, who appeared much astonished at these hesitations, barked two or three times without quitting his post, as if to protest against this humiliating retreat; but, being called by Dagobert, he hastened to rejoin the main body.

It was now about five o'clock in the evening. A high wind swept thick masses of grayish, rainy cloud rapidly across the sky. The Boulevard de l'Hôpital, which bordered on this portion of the convent-garden, was, as we before said, almost deserted. Dagobert, Agricola, and the sewing-girl could hold a private conference in this solitary place.

The soldier did not disguise the extreme impatience that these delays occasioned in him. Hardly had they turned the corner of the street, when he said to Mother Bunch: "Come, my child, explain yourself. I am upon hot coals."

"The house in which the daughters of Marshal Simon are confined is a convent, M. Dagobert."

"A convent!" cried the soldier: "I might have suspected it." Then he added: "Well, what then? I will fetch them from a convent as soon as from any other place. Once is not always."

"But, M. Dagobert, they are confined against their will and against yours. They will not give them up."

"They will not give them up? Zounds! we will see about that." And he made a step towards the street.

"Father," said Agricola, holding him back, "one moment's patience; let us hear all."

"I will hear nothing. What! the children are there—two steps from me—I know it—and I shall not have them, either by fair means or foul? Oh! that would indeed be curious. Let me go."

"Listen to me, I beseech you, M. Dagobert," said Mother Bunch, taking his hand: "there is another way to deliver these poor children. And that without violence—for violence, as Mdlle. de Cardoville told me, would ruin all."

"If there is any other way—quick—let me know it!"

"Here is a ring of Mdlle. de Cardoville's."

"And who is this Mdlle. de Cardoville?"

"Father," said Agricola, "it is the generous young lady, who offered to be my bail, and to whom I have very important matters to communicate."

"Good, good," replied Dagobert; "we will talk of that presently. Well, my dear girl—this ring?"

"You must take it directly, M. Dagobert, to the Count de Montbron, No. 7, Place Vendôme. He appears to be a person of influence, and is a friend of Mdlle. de Cardoville's. This ring will prove that you come on her behalf, and you will tell him, that she is confined as a lunatic in the asylum next door to this convent, in which the daughters of Marshal Simon are detained against their will."

"Well, well—what next?"

"Then the Count de Montbron will take the proper steps with persons in authority, to restore both Mdlle. de Cardoville and the daughters of Marshal Simon to liberty—and perhaps, to-morrow, or the day after——"

"To-morrow or the day after!" cried Dagobert; "perhaps?—It is to-day, on the instant, that I *must* have them. The day after to-morrow would be of much use! Thanks, my good girl, but keep your ring: I will manage my own business. Wait for me here, my boy."

"What are you going to do, father?" cried Agricola, still holding back the soldier. "It is a convent, remember."

"You are only a raw recruit; I have my theory of convents at my fingers' end. In Spain, I have put it in practice a hundred times. Here is what will happen. I knock; a portress opens the door to me; she asks me what I want, but I make no answer; she tries to stop me, but I pass on; once in the convent, I walk over it from top to bottom, calling my children with all my might."

"But, M. Dagobert, the nuns?" said Mother Bunch, still trying to detain the soldier.

"The nuns run after me, screaming like so many magpies. I know them. At Seville I fetched out an Andalusian girl, whom they were trying to keep by force. Well, I walk about the convent calling for Rose and Blanche. They hear me, and answer. If they are shut in, I take the first piece of furniture that comes to hand, and break open the door."

"But, M. Dagobert—the nuns—the nuns?"

"The nuns, with all their squalling, will not prevent my breaking open the door, seizing my children in my arms, and carrying them off. Should the outer door be shut, there will be a second smash—that's all. So," added Dagobert, disengaging himself from the grasp, "wait for me here. In ten minutes I shall be back again. Go and get a hackney-coach ready, my boy."

More calm than Dagobert, and, above all, better informed as to the provisions of the Penal Code, Agricola was alarmed at the consequences that might attend the veteran's strange mode of proceeding. So, throwing himself before him, he exclaimed: "One word more, I entreat you."

"Zounds! make haste!"

"If you attempt to enter the convent by force, you will ruin all."

"How so?"

"First of all, M. Dagobert," said Mother Bunch, "there are men in the convent. As I came out just now, I saw the porter loading his gun, and heard the gardener talking of his sharp scythe, and the rounds he was to make at night."

"Much I care for a porter's gun and a gardener's scythe!"

"Well, father; but listen to me a moment, I conjure you. Suppose you knock, and the door is opened—the porter will ask you what you want."

"I tell that him I wish to speak to the superior, and so walk into the convent."

"But, M. Dagobert," said Mother Bunch, "when once

you have crossed the court-yard, you reach a second door, with a wicket. A nun comes to it, to see who rings, and does not open the door till she knows the object of the visit."

"I will tell her that I wish to see the lady superior."

"Then, father, as you are not known in the convent, they will go and inform the superior."

"Well, what then?"

"She will come down."

"What next?"

"She will ask you what you want, M. Dagobert."

"What I want?—the devil! my children!"

"One minute's patience, father. You cannot doubt, from the precautions they have taken, that they wish to detain these young ladies against their will, and against yours."

"Doubt! I am sure of it. To come to that point, they began by turning the head of my poor wife."

"Then, father, the superior will reply to you that she does not know what you mean, and that the young ladies are not in the convent."

"And I will reply to her, that they are in the convent—witness Mother Bunch and Spoil-sport."

"The superior will answer, that she does not know you; that she has no explanations to give you; and will close the wicket."

"Then I break it open—since one must come to that in the end—so leave me alone, I tell you! 'sblood! leave me alone!"

"And, on this noise and violence, the porter will run and fetch the guard, and they will begin by arresting you."

"And what will become of your poor children, then, M. Dagobert?" said Mother Bunch.

Agricola's father had too much good sense not to feel the truth of these observations of the girl and his son; but he knew also, that, cost what it might, the orphans must be delivered before the morrow. The alternative was terrible—so terrible, that, pressing his two hands to his burning forehead, Dagobert sunk back upon a stone bench, as if struck down by the inexorable fatality of the dilemma.

Agricola and the workwoman, deeply moved by this mute despair, exchanged a sad look. The smith, seating himself beside the soldier, said to him: "Do not be cast down-hearted, father. Remember what's been told you. By going with this ring of Mdlle. de Cardoville's to the influential gentleman she named, the young ladies may be free by to-morrow, or, at worst, by the day after."

"Blood and thunder! you want to drive me mad!" exclaimed Dagobert, starting up from the bench, and looking at Mother Bunch and his son with so savage an expression that Agricola and the sempstress drew back, with an air of surprise and uneasiness.

"Pardon me, my children!" said Dagobert, recovering himself after a long silence. "I am wrong to get in a passion, for we do not understand one another. What you say is true; and yet I am right to speak as I do. Listen to me. You are an honest man, Agricola; you an honest girl; what I tell you is meant for you alone. I have brought these children from the depths of Siberia—do you know why? That they may be to-morrow morning in the Rue Saint-François. If they are not there, I have failed to execute the last wish of their dying mother."

"No. 3, Rue Saint François?" cried Agricola, interrupting his father.

"Yes; how do you know the number?" said Dagobert.

"Is not the date inscribed on a bronze medal?"

"Yes," replied Dagobert, more and more surprised; "who told you?"

"One instant, father!" exclaimed Agricola; "let me reflect. I think I guess it. Did you not tell me, my good sister, that Mdlle. de Cardoville was not mad?"

"Not mad. They detain her in this asylum to prevent her communicating with any one. She believes herself, like the daughters of Marshal Simon, the victim of an odious machination."

"No doubt of it," cried the smith. "I understand all now. Mdlle. de Cardoville has the same interest as the orphans to appear to-morrow at the Rue Saint-François. But she does not perhaps know it."

"How so?"

"One word more, my good girl. Did Mdlle. de Cardoville tell you that she had a powerful motive to obtain her freedom by to-morrow?"

"No; for when she gave me this ring for the Count de Montbron, she said to me: 'By this means both I and Marshal Simon's daughters will be at liberty either to-morrow or the day after——'"

"But explain yourself, then," said Dagobert to his son, with impatience.

"Just now," replied the smith, "when you came to seek me in prison, I told you, father, that I had a sacred duty to perform, and that I would rejoin you at home."

"Yes; and I went, on my side, to take some measures, of which I will speak to you presently."

"I ran instantly to the house in the Rue de Babylone, not knowing that Mdlle. de Cardoville was mad, or passed for mad. A servant, who opened the door to me, informed me that the young lady had been seized with a sudden attack of madness. You may conceive, father, what a blow that was to me! I asked where she was: they answered, that they did not know. I asked if I could speak to any of the family; as my jacket did not inspire any great confidence, they replied that none of her family were at present there. I was in despair, but an idea occurred to me. I said to myself: 'If she is mad, her family physician must know where they have taken her; if she is in a state to hear me, he will take me to her; if not, I will speak to her doctor, as I would to her relations. A doctor is often a friend.' I asked the servant, therefore, to give me the doctor's address. I obtained it without difficulty—Dr. Baleinier, No. 12, Rue Taranne. I ran thither, but he had gone out; they told me that I should find him about five o'clock at his asylum, which is next door to the convent. That is how we have met."

"But the medal—the medal?" said Dagobert, impatiently; "where did you see it?"

"It is with regard to this and other things that I wished to make important communications to Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"And what are these communications?"

"The fact is, father, I had gone to her the day of your departure, to beg her to get me bail. I was followed; and when she learned this from her waiting-woman, she concealed me in a hiding-place. It was a sort of little vaulted room, in which no light was admitted, except through a tunnel, made like a chimney; yet in a few minutes, I could see pretty clearly. Having nothing better to do, I looked all about me and saw that the walls were covered with wainscoting. The entrance to this room was composed of a sliding panel, moving by means of weights and wheels admirably contrived. As these concern my trade, I was interested in them, so I examined the springs, spite of my emotion, with curiosity, and understood the nature of their play; but there was one brass knob, of which I could not discover the use. It was in vain to pull and move it from right to left, none of the springs were touched. I said to myself: 'This knob, no doubt, belongs to another piece of

mechanism'—and the idea occurred to me, instead of drawing it towards me, to push it with force. Directly after, I heard a grating sound, and perceived, just above the entrance of the hiding-place, one of the panels, about two feet square, fly open like the door of a secretary. As I had, no doubt, pushed the spring rather too hard, a bronze medal and chain fell out with a shock."

"And you saw the address—Rue Saint-François?" cried Dagobert.

"Yes, father; and with this medal, a sealed letter fell to the ground. On picking it up, I saw that it was addressed, in large letters: 'For Mdlle. de Cardoville. To be opened by her the moment it is delivered.' Under these words, I saw the initials 'R.' and 'C.,' accompanied by a flourish, and this date: 'Paris, November the 13th, 1830.' On the other side of the envelope I perceived two seals, with the letters 'R.' and 'C.,' surmounted by a coronet."

"And the seals were unbroken?" asked Mother Bunch.

"Perfectly whole."

"No doubt, then, Mdlle. de Cardoville was ignorant of the existence of these papers," said the sempstress.

"That was my first idea, since she was recommended to open the letter immediately, and, notwithstanding this recommendation, which bore date two years back, the seals remained untouched."

"It is evident," said Dagobert. "What did you do?"

"I replaced the whole where it was before, promising myself to inform Mdlle. de Cardoville of it. But, a few minutes after, they entered my hiding-place, which had been discovered, and I did not see her again. I was only able to whisper a few words of doubtful meaning to one of her waiting-women, on the subject of what I had found, hoping thereby to arouse the attention of her mistress; and, as soon as I was able to write to you, my good sister, I begged you to go and call upon Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"But this medal," said Dagobert, "is exactly like that possessed by the daughters of Marshal Simon. How can you account for that?"

"Nothing so plain, father. Mdlle. de Cardoville is their relation. I remember now, that she told me so."

"A relation of Rose and Blanche?"

"Yes," added Mother Bunch; "she told that also to me just now."

"Well, then," resumed Dagobert, looking anxiously at his son, "do you now understand why I must have my

children this very day? Do you now understand, as their poor mother told me on her death-bed, that one day's delay might ruin all? Do you now see that I cannot be satisfied with a perhaps to-morrow, when I have come all the way from Siberia, only that those children might be to-morrow in the Rue Saint-François? Do you at last perceive that I must have them this night, even if I have to set fire to the convent?"

"But, father, if you employ violence——"

"Zounds! do you know what the commissary of police answered me this morning, when I went to renew my charge against your mother's confessor? He said to me that there was no proof, and that they could do nothing."

"But now there is proof, father, for at least we know where the young girls are. With that certainty we shall be strong. The law is more powerful than all the superiors of convents in the world."

"And the Count de Montbron, to whom Mdlle. de Cardoville begs you to apply," said Mother Bunch, "is a man of influence. Tell him the reasons that make it so important for these young ladies, as well as Mdlle. de Cardoville, to be at liberty this evening, and he will certainly hasten the course of justice, and to-night your children will be restored to you."

"Sister is in the right, father. Go to the Count. Meanwhile, I will run to the commissary, and tell him that we now know where the young girls are confined. Do you go home, and wait for us, my good girl. We will meet at our own house!"

Dagobert had remained plunged in thought; suddenly, he said to Agricola: "Be it so. I will follow your counsel. But suppose the commissary says to you: 'We cannot act before to-morrow'—suppose the Count de Montbron says to me the same thing—do not think I shall stand with my arms folded until the morning."

"But, father——"

"It is enough," resumed the soldier in an abrupt voice: "I have made up my mind. Run to the commissary, my boy; wait for us at home, my good girl; I will go to the count. Give me the ring. Now for the address!"

"The Count de Montbron, No. 7, Place Vendôme," said she; "you come on behalf of Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"I have a good memory," answered the soldier. "We will meet as soon as possible in the Rue Brise-Miche."

"Yes, father; have good courage. You will see that the law protects and defends honest people."

"So much the better," said the soldier; "because, otherwise, honest people would be obliged to protect and defend themselves. Farewell, my children! we will meet soon in the Rue Brise-Miche."

* * * * * * *

When Dagobert, Agricola, and Mother Bunch separated, it was already dark night.

CHAPTER X.

THE MEETING.

It is eight o'clock in the evening, the rain dashes against the windows of Frances Baudoin's apartment in the Rue Brise-Miche, while violent squalls of wind shake the badly closed doors and casements. The disorder and confusion of this humble abode, usually kept with so much care and neatness, bore testimony to the serious nature of the sad events which had thus disturbed existences hitherto peaceful in their obscurity.

The paved floor was soiled with mud, and a thick layer of dust covered the furniture, once so bright and clean. Since Frances was taken away by the commissary, the bed had not been made; at night Dagobert had thrown himself upon it for a few hours in his clothes, when, worn out with fatigue, and crushed by despair, he had returned from new and vain attempts to discover Rose and Blanche's prison-house. Upon the drawers stood a bottle, a glass, and some fragments of dry bread, proving the frugality of the soldier, whose means of subsistence were reduced to the money lent by the pawnbroker upon the things pledged by Mother Bunch, after the arrest of Frances.

By the faint glimmer of a candle, placed upon the little stove, now cold as marble, for the stock of wood had long been exhausted, one might have seen the hunchback sleeping upon a chair, her head resting on her bosom, her hands concealed beneath her cotton apron, and her feet resting on the lowest rung of the chair; from time to time, she shivered in her damp, chill garments.

After that long day of fatigue and diverse emotions, the poor creature had eaten nothing. Had she even thought of it, she would have been at a loss for bread. Waiting for the

return of Dagobert and Agricola, she had sunk into an agitated sleep—very different, alas! from calm and refreshing slumber. From time to time, she half opened her eyes uneasily, and looked around her. Then, again, overcome by irresistible heaviness, her head fell upon her bosom.

After some minutes of silence, only interrupted by the noise of the wind, a slow and heavy step was heard on the landing-place. The door opened, and Dagobert entered, followed by Spoil-sport.

"Waking with a start, Mother Bunch raised her head hastily, sprang from her chair, and, advancing rapidly to meet Agricola's father, said to him: "Well, M. Dagobert! have you good news? Have you——"

She could not continue, she was so struck with the gloomy expression of the soldier's features. Absorbed in his reflections, he did not at first appear to perceive the speaker, but threw himself despondingly on a chair, rested his elbows upon the table, and hid his face in his hands. After a long meditation, he rose, and said in a low voice: "It must—yes, it must be done!"

Taking a few steps up and down the room, Dagobert looked around him, as if in search of something. At length, after about a minute's examination, he perceived near the stove, a bar of iron, perhaps two feet long, serving to lift the covers, when too hot for the fingers. Taking this in his hand, he looked at it closely, poised it to judge of its weight, and then laid it down upon the drawers with an air of satisfaction. Surprised at the long silence of Dagobert, the needlewoman followed his movements with timid and uneasy curiosity. But soon her surprise gave way to fright, when she saw the soldier take down his knapsack, place it upon a chair, open it, and draw from it a pair of pocket-pistols, the locks of which he tried with the utmost caution.

Seized with terror, the sempstress could not forbear exclaiming: "Good gracious, M. Dagobert! what are you going to do?"

The soldier looked at her as if he only now perceived her for the first time, and said to her in a cordial, but abrupt voice: "Good-evening, my good girl! What is the time?"

"Eight o'clock has just struck at Saint-Mery's, M. Dagobert."

"Eight o'clock," said the soldier, speaking to himself; "only eight!"

Placing the pistols by the side of the iron bar, he appeared again to reflect, while he cast his eyes around him.

"M. Dagobert," ventured the girl, "you have not, then, good news?"

"No."

That single word was uttered by the soldier in so sharp a tone, that, not daring to question him further, Mother Bunch sat down in silence. Spoil-sport came to lean his head on the knees of the girl, and followed the movements of Dagobert with as much curiosity as herself.

After remaining for some moments pensive and silent, the soldier approached the bed, took a sheet from it, appeared to measure its length, and then said, turning towards Mother Bunch: "The scissors!"

"But, M. Dagobert——"

"Come, my good girl! the scissors!" replied Dagobert, in a kind tone, but one that commanded obedience. The sempstress took the scissors from Frances' work-basket, and presented them to the soldier.

"Now, hold the other end of the sheet, my girl, and draw it out tight."

In a few minutes, Dagobert had cut the sheet into four strips, which he twisted in the fashion of cords, fastening them here and there with bits of tape, so as to preserve the twist, and tying them strongly together, so as to make a rope of about twenty feet long. This, however, did not suffice him, for he said to himself: "Now I must have a hook."

Again he looked around him, and Mother Bunch, more and more frightened, for she now no longer doubted Dagobert's designs, said to him timidly: "M. Dagobert, Agricola has not yet come in. It may be some good news that makes him so late."

"Yes," said the soldier, bitterly, as he continued to cast round his eyes in search of something he wanted; "good news like mine! But I must have a strong iron hook."

Still looking about, he found one of the coarse, gray sacks, that Frances was accustomed to make. He took it, opened it, and said to the work-girl: "Put me the iron bar and the cord into this bag, my girl. It will be easier to carry."

"Heavens!" cried she, obeying his directions; "you will not go without seeing Agricola, M. Dagobert? He may perhaps have some good news to tell you."

"Be satisfied! I shall wait for my boy. I need not start before ten o'clock—so I have time."

"Alas, M. Dagobert! have you lost all hope?"

"On the contrary. I have good hope but in myself."

So saying, Dagobert twisted the upper end of the sack, for the purpose of closing it, and placed it on the drawers, by the side of his pistols.

"At all events, you will wait for Agricola, M. Dagobert?"

"Yes, if he arrives before ten o'clock."

"Alas; you have then quite made up your mind?"

"Quite. And yet, if I were weak enough to believe in bad omens——"

"Sometimes, M. Dagobert, omens do not deceive one," said the girl, hoping to induce the soldier to abandon his dangerous resolution.

"Yes," resumed Dagobert; "old women say so—and, although I am not an old woman, what I saw just now weighed heavily on my heart. After all, I may have taken a feeling of anger for a presentiment."

"What have you seen?"

"I will tell it you, my good girl; it may help to pass the time, which appears long enough." Then, interrupting himself, he exclaimed: "Was it the half hour that just struck?"

"Yes," M. Dagobert; it is half-past eight."

"Still an hour and a half," said Dagobert, in a hollow voice. "This," he added, "is what I saw. As I came along the street, my notice was attracted by a large red placard, at the head of which was a black panther devouring a white horse. That sight gave me a turn, for you must know, my good girl, that a black panther destroyed a poor old white horse that I had, Spoil-sport's companion, whose name was Jovial."

At the sound of this name, once so familiar, Spoil-sport, who was crouching at the workwoman's feet, raised his head hastily, and looked at Dagobert.

"You see that beasts have memory—he recollects," said the soldier, sighing himself at the remembrance. Then, addressing his dog, he added: "Dost remember Jovial?"

On hearing this name a second time pronounced by his master, in a voice of emotion, Spoil-sport gave a low whine, as if to indicate that he had not forgotten his old travelling-companion.

"It was, indeed, a melancholy incident, M. Dagobert," said Mother Bunch, "to find upon this placard a panther devouring a horse."

"That is nothing to what's to come; you shall hear the rest. I drew near the bill, and read in it, that one Morok, just arrived from Germany, is about to exhibit in a theatre

different wild beasts that he tamed, among others a splendid lion, a tiger, and a black Java panther named *Death*."

"What an awful name!" said the hearer.

"You will think it more awful, my child, when I tell you, that this is the very panther which strangled my horse at Leipsic, four months ago."

"Good Heaven! you are right, M. Dagobert," said the girl, "it is awful."

"Wait a little," said Dagobert, whose countenance was growing more and more gloomy, "that is not all. It was by means of this very Morok, the owner of the panther, that I and my poor children were imprisoned in Leipsic."

"And this wicked man is in Paris, and wishes you evil?" said Mother Bunch. "Oh! you are right, M. Dagobert; you must take care of yourself; it is a bad omen."

"For *him*, if I catch him," said Dagobert, in a hollow tone. "We have old accounts to settle."

"M. Dagobert," cried Mother Bunch, listening; "some one is running up the stairs. It is Agricola's footstep. I am sure he has good news."

"That will just do," said the soldier, hastily, without answering. "Agricola is a smith. He will be able to find me the iron hook."

A few moments after, Agricola entered the room; but, alas! the sempstress perceived at the first glance, in the dejected countenance of the workman, the ruin of her cherished hopes.

"Well!" said Dagobert to his son, in a tone which clearly announced the little faith he attached to the steps taken by Agricola; "well, what news?"

"Father, it is enough to drive one mad—to make one dash one's brains out against the wall!" cried the smith in a rage.

Dagobert turned towards Mother Bunch, and said: "You see, my poor child—I was sure of it."

"Well, father," cried Agricola; "have you seen the Count de Montbron?"

"The Count de Montbron set out for Lorraine three days ago. That is *my* good news," continued the soldier, with bitter irony; "let us have yours—I long to know all. I need to know, if, on appealing to the laws, which, as you told me, protect and defend honest people, it ever happens that the rogues get the best of it. I want to know this, and *then* I want an iron hook—so I count upon you for both."

"What do you mean, father?"

"First, tell me what you have done. We have time. It

is not much more than half-past eight. On leaving me, where did you go first?"

"To the commissary, who had already received your depositions."

"What did he say to you?"

"After having very kindly listened to all I had to state, he answered, that these young girls were placed in a respectable house, a convent—so that there did not appear any urgent necessity for their immediate removal—and besides, he could not take upon himself to violate the sanctity of a religious dwelling upon your simple testimony; to-morrow, he will make his report to the proper authorities, and steps will be taken accordingly."

"Yes, yes—plenty of put offs," said the soldier.

"'But, sir,' answered I to him," resumed Agricola, "'it is now, this very night, that you ought to act, for if these young girls should not be present to-morrow morning in the Rue Saint François, their interests may suffer incalculable damage.'—'I am very sorry for it,' replied he, 'but I cannot, upon your simple declaration, or that of your father, who —like yourself—is no relation or connection of these young persons, act in direct opposition to forms, which could not be set aside, even on the demand of a family. The law has its delays and its formalities, to which we are obliged to submit.'"

"Certainly!" said Dagobert. "We must submit to them, at the risk of becoming cowardly, ungrateful traitors!"

"Didst speak also of Mdlle. de Cardoville to him?" asked the work-girl.

"Yes—but he answered me on this subject in much the same manner: 'It was very serious; there was no proof in support of my deposition. A third party had told me that Mdlle. de Cardoville affirms she was not mad; but all mad people pretend to be sane. He could not, therefore, upon my sole testimony, take upon himself to enter the house of a respectable physician. But he would report upon it, and the law would have its course——'"

"When I wished to act just now for myself," said Dagobert, "did I not foresee all this? And yet I was weak enough to listen to you."

"But, father, what you wished to attempt was impossible, and you agreed that it would expose you to far too dangerous consequences."

"So," resumed the soldier, without answering his son, "they told you in plain terms, that we must not think of

obtaining legally the release of Rose and Blanche this evening or even to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, father. In the eyes of the law, there is no special urgency. The question may not be decided for two or three days."

"That is all I wished to know," said Dagobert, rising and walking up and down the room.

"And yet," resumed his son, "I did not consider myself beaten. In despair, but believing that justice could not remain deaf to such equitable claims, I ran to the *Palais de Justice*, hoping to find there a judge, a magistrate who would receive my complaint, and act upon it."

"Well?" said the soldier, stopping him.

"I was told that the courts shut every day at five o'clock, and do not open again till ten in the morning. Thinking of your despair, and of the position of poor Mdlle. de Cardoville, I determined to make one more attempt. I entered a guard-house of troops of the line, commanded by a lieutenant. I told him all. He saw that I was so much moved, and I spoke with such warmth and conviction, that he became interested.—'Lieutenant,' said I to him, 'grant me one favor: let a petty officer and two soldiers go to the convent to obtain a legal entrance. Let them ask to see the daughters of Marshal Simon, and learn whether it is their choice to remain, or return to my father, who brought them from Russia. You will then see if they are not detained against their will——'"

"And what answer did he give you, Agricola?" asked Mother Bunch, while Dagobert shrugged his shoulders, and continued to walk up and down.

"'My good fellow,' said he, 'what you ask me is impossible. I understand your motives, but I cannot take upon myself so serious a measure. I should be broke were I to enter a convent by force.'—'Then, sir, what am I to do? It is enough to turn one's head.'—'Faith, I don't know,' said the lieutenant; 'it will be safest, I think, to wait.'—Then, believing I had done all that was possible, father, I resolved to come back, in the hope that you might have been more fortunate than I—but, alas! I was deceived!"

So saying, the smith sank upon a chair, for he was worn out with anxiety and fatigue. There was a moment of profound silence after these words of Agricola, which destroyed the last hopes of the three, mute and crushed beneath the strokes of inexorable fatality.

A new incident came to deepen the sad and painful character of this scene.

CHAPTER XI.

DISCOVERIES.

The door—which Agricola had not thought of fastening—opened, as it were, timidly, and Frances Baudoin, Dagobert's wife, pale, sinking, hardly able to support herself, appeared on the threshold.

The soldier, Agricola, and Mother Bunch, were plunged in such deep dejection, that neither of them at first perceived the entrance. Frances advanced two steps into the room, fell upon her knees, clasped her hands together, and said in a weak and humble voice: "My poor husband—pardon!"

At these words, Agricola and the work-girl—whose backs were towards the door—turned round suddenly, and Dagobert hastily raised his head.

"My mother!" cried Agricola, running to Frances.

"My wife!" cried Dagobert, as he also rose, and advanced to meet the unfortunate woman.

"On your knees, dear mother!" said Agricola, stooping down to embrace her affectionately. "Get up, I entreat you!"

"No, my child," said Frances, in her mild, firm accents, "I will not rise, till your father has forgiven me. I have wronged him much—now I know it."

"Forgive you, my poor wife?" said the soldier, as he drew near with emotion. "Have I ever accused you, except in my first transport of despair? No, no; it was the bad priests that I accused, and there I was right. Well! I have you again," added he, assisting his son to raise Frances; "one grief the less. They have then restored you to liberty? Yesterday, I could not even learn in what prison they had put you. I have so many cares that I could not think of you only. But come, dear wife: sit down!"

"How feeble you are, dear mother!—how cold—how pale!" said Agricola with anguish, his eyes filling with tears. "Why did you not let us know?" added he. "We would have gone to fetch you. But how you tremble! Your hands are frozen!" continued the smith, as he knelt down before Frances. Then, turning towards Mother Bunch: "Pray, make a little fire directly."

"I thought of it, as soon as your father came in, Agricola, but there is no wood nor charcoal left."

"Then pray borrow some of Father Loriot, my dear sister. He is too good a fellow to refuse. My poor mother trembles so—she might fall ill."

Hardly had he said the words, than Mother Bunch went out. The smith rose from the ground, took the blanket from the bed, and carefully wrapped it about the knees and feet of his mother. Then, again kneeling down, he said to her: "Your hands, dear mother!" and, taking those feeble palms in his own, he tried to warm them with his breath.

Nothing could be more touching than this picture: the robust young man, with his energetic and resolute countenance, expressing by his looks the greatest tenderness, and paying the most delicate attentions to his poor, pale, trembling old mother.

Dagobert, kind-hearted as his son, went to fetch a pillow, and brought it to his wife, saying: "Lean forward a little, and I will put this pillow behind you; you will be more comfortable and warmer."

"How you both spoil me!" said Frances, trying to smile. "And you to be so kind, after all the ill I have done!" added she to Dagobert, as, disengaging one of her hands from those of her son, she took the soldier's hand and pressed it to her tearful eyes. "In prison," said she in a low voice, "I had time to repent."

Agricola's heart was near breaking at the thought that his pious and good mother, with her angelic purity, should for a moment have been confined in prison with so many miserable creatures. He would have made some attempt to console her on the subject of the painful past, but he feared to give a new shock to Dagobert, and was silent.

"Where is Gabriel, dear mother?" inquired he. "How is he? As you have seen him, tell us all about him."

"I have seen Gabriel," said Frances, drying her tears; "he is confined at home. His superiors have rigorously forbidden his going out. Luckily, they did not prevent his receiving me, for his words and counsels have opened my eyes to many things. It is from him that I learned how guilty I had been to you, my poor husband."

"How so?" asked Dagobert.

"Why, you know that if I caused you so much grief, it was not from wickedness. When I saw you in such despair, I suffered almost as much myself; but I durst not tell you so, for fear of breaking my oath. I had resolved to keep it,

believing that I did well, believing that it was my duty. And yet something told me that it could not be my duty to cause you so much pain. 'Alas, my God! enlighten me!' I exclaimed in my prison, as I knelt down and prayed, in spite of the mockeries of the other women. 'Why should a just and pious work, commanded by my confessor, the most respectable of men, overwhelm me and mine with so much misery? 'Have mercy on me, my God, and teach me if I have done wrong without knowing it!' As I prayed with fervor, God heard me, and inspired me with the idea of applying to Gabriel. 'I thank Thee, Father! I will obey!' said I within myself. 'Gabriel is like my own child; but he is also a priest, a martyr—almost a saint. If any one in the world imitates the charity of our blessed Saviour, it is surely he. When I leave this prison, I will go and consult him, and he will clear up my doubts.'"

"You are right, dear mother," cried Agricola; "it was a thought from heaven. Gabriel is an angel of purity, courage, nobleness—the type of the true and good priest!"

"Ah, poor wife!" said Dagobert, with bitterness; "if you had never had any confessor but Gabriel!"

"I thought of it before he went on his journey," said Frances, with simplicity. "I should have liked to confess to the dear boy—but I fancied Abbé Dubois would be offended, and that Gabriel would be too indulgent with regard to my sins."

"Your sins, poor dear mother?" said Agricola. "As if you ever committed any!"

"And what did Gabriel tell you?" asked the soldier.

"Alas, my dear! had I but had such an interview with him sooner! What I told him of Abbé Dubois roused his suspicions, and he questioned me, dear child, as to many things of which he had never spoken to me before. Then I opened to him my whole heart, and he did the same to me, and we both made sad discoveries with regard to persons whom we had always thought very respectable, and who yet had deceived each of us, unknown to the other."

"How so?"

"Why, they used to tell him, under the seal of secrecy, things that were supposed to come from me; and they used to tell me, under the same seal of secrecy, things that were supposed to come from him. Thus, he confessed to me, that he did not feel at first any vocation for the priesthood; but they told him that I should not believe myself safe in this world or in the next, if he did not take orders, because

I felt persuaded that I could best serve the Lord by giving Him so good a servant; and that yet I had never dared to ask Gabriel himself to give me this proof of his attachment, though I had taken him from the street, a deserted orphan, and brought him up as my own son, at the cost of labor and privations. Then, how could it be otherwise? The poor dear child, thinking he could please me, sacrificed himself. He entered the seminary."

"Horrible," said Agricola; "'tis an infamous snare, and, for the priests who were guilty of it, a sacrilegious lie!"

"During all that time," resumed Frances, "they were holding very different language to me. I was told that Gabriel felt his vocation, but that he durst not avow it to me, for fear of my being jealous on account of Agricola, who, being brought up as a workman, would not enjoy the same advantages as those which the priesthood would secure to Gabriel. So when he asked my permission to enter the seminary—dear child! he entered it with regret, but he thought he was making me so happy!—instead of discouraging this idea, I did all in my power to persuade him to follow it, assuring him that he could not do better, and that it would occasion me great joy. You understand, I exaggerated, for fear he should think me jealous on account of Agricola."

"What an odious machination!" said Agricola, in amazement. "They were speculating in this unworthy manner upon your mutual devotion. Thus Gabriel saw the expression of your dearest wish in the almost forced encouragement given to his resolution."

"Little by little, however, as Gabriel has the best heart in the world, the vocation really came to him. That was natural enough—he was born to console those who suffer, and devote himself for the unfortunate. He would never have spoken to me of the past, had it not been for this morning's interview. But then I beheld him, who is usually so mild and gentle, become indignant, exasperated, against M. Rodin and another person whom he accuses. He had serious complaints against them already, but these discoveries, he says, will make up the measure."

At these words of Frances, Dagobert pressed his hand to his forehead, as if to recall something to his memory. For some minutes he had listened with surprise, and almost terror, to the account of these secret plots, conducted with such deep and crafty dissimulation.

Frances continued: "When at last I acknowledged to

Gabriel, that, by the advice of Abbé Dubois, my confessor, I had delivered to a stranger the children confided to my husband—General Simon's daughters—the dear boy blamed me, though with great regret, not for having wished to instruct the poor orphans in the truths of our holy religion, but for having acted without the consent of my husband, who alone was answerable before God and man for the charge entrusted to him. Gabriel severely censured Abbé Dubois' conduct, who had given me, he said, bad and perfidious counsels; and then, with the sweetness of an angel, the dear boy consoled me, and exhorted me to come and tell you all. My poor husband! he would fain have accompanied me, for I had scarcely courage to come hither, so strongly did I feel the wrong I had done you; but, unfortunately, Gabriel is confined at the seminary by the strict order of his superiors; he could not come with me, and——"

Here Dagobert, who seemed much agitated, abruptly interrupted his wife. "One word, Frances," said he; "for, in truth, in the midst of so many cares, and black, diabolical plots, one loses one's memory, and the head begins to wander. Didst not tell me, the day the children disappeared, that Gabriel, when taken in by you, had round his neck a bronze medal, and in his pocket a book filled with papers in a foreign language?"

"Yes, my dear."

"And this medal and these papers were afterwards delivered to your confessor?"

"Yes, my dear."

"And Gabriel never spoke of them since?"

"Never."

Agricola, hearing this from his mother, looked at her with surprise, and exclaimed: "Then Gabriel has the same interest as the daughters of General Simon, or Mdlle. de Cardoville, to be in the Rue Saint-François to-morrow?"

"Certainly," said Dagobert. "And now do you remember what he said to us, just after my arrival—that, in a few days, he would need our support in a serious matter?"

"Yes, father."

"And he is kept a prisoner at his seminary! And he tells your mother that he has to complain of his superiors! and he asked us for our support with so sad and grave an air, that I said to him——"

"He would speak so, if about to engage in a deadly duel," interrupted Agricola. "True, father! and yet you, who are a good judge of valor, acknowledged that Gabriel's courage

was equal to yours. For him so to fear his superiors, the danger must be great indeed."

"Now that I have heard your mother, I understand it all," said Dagobert. "Gabriel is like Rose and Blanche, like Mdlle. de Cardoville, like your mother, like all of us, perhaps—the victim of a secret conspiracy of wicked priests. Now that I know their dark machinations, their infernal perseverance, I see," added the soldier, in a whisper, "that it requires strength to struggle against them. I had not the least idea of their power."

"You are right, father; for those who are hypocritical and wicked do as much harm as those who are good and charitable, like Gabriel, do good. There is no more implacable enemy than a bad priest."

"I know it, and that's what frightens me; for my poor children are in their hands. But is all lost? Shall I bring myself to give them up without an effort? Oh, no, no! I will not show any weakness—and yet, since your mother told us of these diabolical plots, I do not know how it is—but I seem less strong, less resolute. What is passing around me appears so terrible. The spiriting away of these children is no longer an isolated fact—it is one of the ramifications of a vast conspiracy, which surrounds and threatens us all. It seems to me as if I and those I love walked together in darkness, in the midst of serpents, in the midst of snares that we can neither see nor struggle against. Well! I'll speak out! I have never feared death—I am not a coward—and yet I confess—yes, I confess it—these black robes frighten me——"

Dagobert pronounced these words in so sincere a tone, that his son started, for he shared the same impression. And it was quite natural. Frank, energetic, resolute characters, accustomed to act and fight in the light of day, never feel but one fear—and that is, to be ensnared and struck in the dark by enemies that escape their grasp. Thus, Dagobert had encountered death twenty times; and yet, on hearing his wife's simple revelation of this dark tissue of lies, and treachery, and crime, the soldier felt a vague sense of fear; and, though nothing was changed in the conditions of his nocturnal enterprise against the convent, it now appeared to him in a darker and more dangerous light.

The silence, which had reigned for some moments, was interrupted by Mother Bunch's return. The latter, knowing that the interview between Dagobert, his wife, and Agricola, ought not to have any importunate witness, knocked

lightly at the door, and remained in the passage with Father Loriot.

"Can we come in, Mme. Frances?" asked the sempstress. "Here is Father Loriot, bringing some wood."

"Yes, yes; come in, my good girl," said Agricola, whilst his father wiped the cold sweat from his forehead.

The door opened, and the worthy dyer appeared, with his hands and arms of an amaranthine color; on one side, he carried a basket of wood, and on the other some live coal in a shovel.

"Good-evening to the company!" said Daddy Loriot. "Thank you for having thought of me, Mme. Frances. You know that my shop and everything in it are at your service. Neighbors should help one another; that's my motto! You were kind enough, I should think, to my late wife!"

Then, placing the wood in a corner, and giving the shovel to Agricola, the worthy dyer, guessing from the sorrowful appearance of the different actors in this scene, that it would be impolite to prolong his visit, added: "You don't want anything else, Mme. Frances?"

"No, thank you, Father Loriot."

"Then, good-evening to the company!" said the dyer; and, addressing Mother Bunch, he added: "Don't forget the letter for M. Dagobert. I durstn't touch it for fear of leaving the marks of my four fingers and thumb in amaranthine! But, good-evening to the company!" and Father Loriot went out.

"M. Dagobert, here is a letter," said Mother Bunch. She set herself to light the fire in the stove, while Agricola drew his mother's arm-chair to the hearth.

"See what it is, my boy," said Dagobert to his son; "my head is so heavy that I cannot see clear." Agricola took the letter, which contained only a few lines, and read it before he looked at the signature:

"At Sea, December 25th, 1831.

"I avail myself of a few minutes' communication with a ship bound direct for Europe, to write to you, my old comrade, a few hasty lines, which will reach you probably by way of Havre, before the arrival of my last letters from India. You must by this time be at Paris, with my wife and child—tell them——

"I am unable to say more—the boat is departing. Only one word: I shall soon be in France. Do not forget the 13th February; the future of my wife and child depends upon it.

"Adieu, my friend! Believe in my eternal gratitude.

"SIMON."

"Agricola—quick! look to your father!" cried the hunchback.

From the first words of this letter, which present circumstances made so cruelly applicable, Dagobert had become deadly pale. Emotion, fatigue, exhaustion, joined to this last blow, made him stagger.

His son hastened to him, and supported him in his arms. But soon the momentary weakness passed away, and Dagobert, drawing his hand across his brow, raised his tall figure to its full height. Then, whilst his eye sparkled, his rough countenance took an expression of determined resolution, and he exclaimed, in wild excitement: "No, no! I will not be a traitor; I will not be a coward. The black robes shall not frighten me; and, this night, Rose and Blanche Simon shall be free!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE PENAL CODE.

Startled for a moment by the dark and secret machinations of the black robes, as he called them, against the persons he most loved, Dagobert might have hesitated an instant to attempt the deliverance of Rose and Blanche; but his indecision ceased directly on the reading of Marshal Simon's letter, which came so timely to remind him of his sacred duties.

To the soldier's passing dejection had succeeded a resolution full of calm and collected energy.

"Agricola, what o'clock is it?" asked he of his son.

"Just struck nine, father."

"You must make me, directly, an iron hook—strong enough to support my weight, and wide enough to hold on the coping of a wall. This stove will be forge and anvil; you will find a hammer in the house; and, as for iron," said the soldier, hesitating, and looking around him, "as for iron—here is some!"

So saying, the soldier took from the hearth a strong pair of tongs, and presented them to his son, adding: "Come, my boy! blow up the fire, blow it to a white heat, and forge me this iron!"

On these words, Frances and Agricola looked at each other with surprise; the smith remained mute and confounded, not knowing the resolution of his father, and the preparations he had already commenced with the needlewoman's aid.

"Don't you hear me, Agricola," repeated Dagobert, still holding the pair of tongs in his hand; "you must make me a hook directly."

"A hook, father?—for what purpose?"

"To tie to the end of a cord that I have here. There must be a loop at one end large enough to fix it securely."

"But this cord—this hook—for what purpose are they?"

"To scale the walls of the convent, if I cannot get in by the door."

"What convent?" asked Frances of her son.

"How, father?" cried the latter, rising abruptly. "You still think of that?"

"Why! what else should I think of?"

"But, father, it is impossible; you will never attempt such an enterprise."

"What is it, my child?" asked Frances, with anxiety. "Where is father going?"

"He is going to break into the convent where Marshal Simon's daughters are confined, and carry them off."

"Great God! my poor husband—a sacrilege!" cried Frances, faithful to her pious traditions, and, clasping her hands together, she endeavored to rise and approach Dagobert.

The soldier, foreseeing that he would have to contend with observations and prayers of all sorts, and resolved not to yield, determined to cut short all useless supplications, which would only make him lose precious time. He said, therefore, with a grave, severe, and almost solemn air, which showed the inflexibility of his determination: "Listen to me, wife—and you also, my son—when, at my age, a man makes up his mind to do anything, he knows the reason why. And when a man has once made up his mind, neither wife nor child can alter it. I have resolved to do my duty; so spare yourselves useless words. It may be your duty to talk to me as you have done; but it is over now, and we will say no more about it. This evening I must be master in my own house."

Timid and alarmed, Frances did not dare to utter a word, but she turned a supplicating glance towards her son.

"Father," said the latter, "one word more—only one."

"Let us hear," replied Dagobert, impatiently.

"I will not combat your resolution; but I will prove to you that you do not know to what you expose yourself."

"I know it all," replied the soldier, in an abrupt tone. "The undertaking is a serious one; but it shall not be said

that I neglected any means to accomplish what I promised to do."

"But, father, you do not know to what danger you expose yourself," said the smith, much alarmed.

"Talk of danger! talk of the porter's gun and the gardener's scythe!" said Dagobert, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously. "Talk of them, and have done with it – for, after all, suppose I were to leave my carcass in the convent, would not you remain to your mother? For twenty years, you were accustomed to do without me. It will be all the less trying to you."

"And I, alas! am the cause of these misfortunes!" cried the poor mother. "Ah! Gabriel had good reason to blame me."

"Mme. Frances, be comforted," whispered the sempstress, who had drawn near to Dagobert's wife. "Agricola will not suffer his father to expose himself thus."

After a moment's hesitation, the smith resumed, in an agitated voice: "I know you too well, father, to think of stopping you by the fear of death."

"Of what danger, then, do you speak?"

"Of a danger from which even you will shrink, brave as you are," said the young man, in a voice of emotion, that forcibly struck his father.

"Agricola," said the soldier, roughly and severely, "that remark is cowardly, you are insulting."

"Father——"

"Cowardly!" resumed the soldier, angrily; "because it is cowardice to wish to frighten a man from his duty—insulting! because you think me capable of being so frightened."

"Oh, M. Dagobert!" exclaimed the sewing-girl, "you do not understand Agricola."

"I understand him too well," answered the soldier, harshly.

Painfully affected by the severity of his father, but firm in his resolution, which sprang from love and respect, Agricola resumed, whilst his heart beat violently. "Forgive me, if I disobey you, father; but, were you to hate me for it, I must tell you to what you expose yourself by scaling at night the walls of a convent——"

"My son! do you dare?" cried Dagobert, his countenance inflamed with rage——

"Agricola!" exclaimed Frances, in tears. "My husband!"

"M. Dagobert, listen to Agricola!" exclaimed Mother Bunch. "It is only in your interest that he speaks."

"Not one word more!" replied the soldier, stamping his foot with anger.

"I tell you, father," exclaimed the smith, growing fearfully pale as he spoke, "that you risk being sent to the galleys!"

"Unhappy boy!" cried Dagobert, seizing his son by the arm; "could you not keep that from me—rather than expose me to become a traitor and a coward?" And the soldier shuddered, as he repeated: "The galleys!"—and, bending down his head, remained mute, pensive, withered, as it were, by those blasting words.

"Yes, to enter an inhabited place by night, in such a manner, is what the law calls burglary, and punishes with the galleys," cried Agricola, at once grieved and rejoicing at his father's depression of mind—"yes, father, the galleys, if you are taken in the act; and there are ten chances to one that you would be so. Mother Bunch has told you, the convent is guarded. This morning, had you attempted to carry off the two young ladies in broad daylight, you would have been arrested; but, at least, the attempt would have been an open one, with a character of honest audacity about it, that hereafter might have procured your acquittal. But to enter by night, and by scaling the walls—I tell you, the galleys would be the consequence. Now, father, decide. Whatever you do, I will do also—for you shall not go alone. Say but the word, and I will forge the hook for you—I have here hammer and pincers—and in an hour we will set out."

A profound silence followed these words—a silence that was only interrupted by the stifled sobs of Frances, who muttered to herself in despair: "Alas! this is the consequence of listening to Abbé Dubois!"

It was in vain that Mother Bunch tried to console Frances. She was herself alarmed, for the soldier was capable of braving even infamy, and Agricola had determined to share the perils of his father.

In spite of his energetic and resolute character, Dagobert remained for some time in a kind of stupor. According to his military habits, he had looked at this nocturnal enterprise only as a *ruse de guerre*, authorized by his good cause, and by the inexorable fatality of his position; but the words of his son brought him back to the fearful reality, and left him the choice of a terrible alternative—either to betray the confidence of Marshal Simon, and set at naught the last wishes of the mother of the orphans—or else to expose

himself, and above all his son, to lasting disgrace—without even the certainty of delivering the orphans after all.

Drying her eyes, bathed in tears, Frances exclaimed, as if by a sudden inspiration: "Dear me! I have just thought of it. There is perhaps a way of getting these dear children from the convent without violence."

"How so, mother?" said Agricola, hastily.

"It is Abbé Dubois, who had them conveyed thither; but Gabriel supposes, that he probably acted by the advice of M. Rodin."

"And if that were so, mother, it would be in vain to apply to M. Rodin. We should get nothing from him."

"Not from him—but perhaps from that powerful abbé, who is Gabriel's superior, and has always patronized him since his first entrance at the seminary."

"What abbé, mother?"

"Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"True, mother; before being a priest, he was a soldier—he may be more accessible than others—and yet——"

"D'Aigrigny!" cried Dagobert, with an expression of hate and horror. "There is then mixed up with these treasons, a man, who was a soldier before being a priest, and whose name is D'Aigrigny?"

"Yes, father; the Marquis d'Aigrigny—before the Restoration, in the service of Russia—but, in 1815, the Bourbons gave him a regiment."

"It is he!" said Dagobert, in a hollow voice. "Always the same! like an evil spirit—to the mother, father, children."

"What do you mean, father?"

"The Marquis d'Aigrigny!" replied Dagobert. "Do you know what is this man? Before he was a priest, he was the murderer of Rose and Blanche's mother, because she despised his love. Before he was a priest, he fought against his country, and twice met General Simon face to face in war. Yes; while the general was prisoner at Leipsic, covered with wounds at Waterloo, the turncoat marquis triumphed with the Russians and English!—Under the Bourbons, this same renegade, loaded with honors, found himself once more face to face with the persecuted soldier of the empire. Between them, this time, there was a mortal duel—the marquis was wounded—General Simon was proscribed, condemned, driven into exile. The renegade, you say, has become a priest. Well! I am now certain, that it is he who has carried off Rose and Blanche, in order to wreak on them his hatred of

their father and mother. It is the infamous D'Aigrigny, who holds them in his power. It is no longer the fortune of these children that I have to defend; it is their life—do you hear what I say?—their very life?"

"What, father! do you think this man capable——"

"A traitor to his country, who finishes by becoming a mock priest, is capable of anything. I tell you, that, perhaps at this moment, he may be killing those children by a slow-fire!" exclaimed the soldier, in a voice of agony. "To separate them from one another was to begin to kill them. Yes!" added Dagobert, with an exasperation impossible to describe; "the daughters of Marshal Simon are in the power of the Marquis d'Aigrigny and his band, and I hesitate to attempt their rescue, for fear of the galleys! The galleys!" added he, with a convulsive burst of laughter; "what do I care for the galleys? Can they send a corpse there? If this last attempt fail, shall I not have the right to blow my brains out?—Put the iron in the fire, my boy—quick! time presses—and strike while the iron's hot!"

"But your son goes with you!" exclaimed Frances, with a cry of maternal despair. Then rising, she threw herself at the feet of Dagobert, and said: "If you are arrested, he will be arrested also."

"To escape the galleys, he will do as I do. I have two pistols."

"And without you—without him," cried the unhappy mother, extending her hands in supplication, "what will become of me?"

"You are right—I was too selfish," said Dagobert. "I will go alone."

"You shall not go alone, father," replied Agricola.

"But your mother?"

"Mother Bunch sees what is passing; she will go to Mr Hardy, my master, and tell him all. He is the most generous of men, and my mother will have food and shelter for the rest of her days."

"And *I* am the cause of all!" cried Frances, wringing her hands in despair. "Punish me, oh, heaven! for it is my fault. I gave up those children. I shall be punished by the death of my child!"

"Agricola, you shall not go with me—I forbid it!" said Dagobert, clasping his son closely to his breast.

"What! when I have pointed out the danger, am I to be the first to shrink from it? you cannot think thus lowly of me, father! Have I not also some one to deliver? The good,

the generous, Mdlle. de Cardoville, who tried to save me from a prison, is a captive in her turn. I will follow you, father. It is my right, my duty, my determination."

So saying, Agricola put into the heated stove the tongs that were intended to form the hook. "Alas! may heaven have pity upon us!" cried his poor mother, sobbing as she still knelt, whilst the soldier seemed a prey to the most violent internal struggle.

"Do not cry so, dear mother; you will break my heart," said Agricola, as he raised her with the sempstress's help. "Be comforted! I have exaggerated the danger of my father, By acting prudently, we two may succeed in our enterprise, without much risk—eh, father? added he, with a significant glance at Dagobert. "Once more, be comforted, dear mother. I will answer for everything. We will deliver Marshal Simon's daughters, and Mdlle. de Cardoville too. Sister, give me the hammer and pincers, there in the press."

The sempstress, drying her tears, did as desired, while Agricola, by the help of bellows, revived the fire in which the tongs were heating.

"Here are your tools, Agricola," said the hunchback, in a deeply-agitated voice, as she presented them with trembling hands to the smith, who, with the aid of the pincers, soon drew from the fire the white-hot tongs, and, with vigorous blows of the hammer, formed them into a hook, taking the stove for his anvil.

Dagobert had remained silent and pensive. Suddenly he said to Frances, taking her by the hand: "You know what metal your son is. To prevent his following me would now be impossible. But do not be afraid, dear wife; we shall succeed—at least, I hope so. And if we should not succeed—if Agricola and me should be arrested—well! we are not cowards; we shall not commit suicide; but father and son will go arm in arm to prison, with heads high and proud, look like two brave men who have done their duty. The day of trial must come, and we will explain all, honestly, openly—we will say, that, driven to the last extremity, finding no support, no protection in the law, we were forced to have recourse to violence. So hammer away, my boy!" added Dagobert, addressing his son, pounding the hot iron; "forge, forge, without fear. Honest judges will absolve honest men."

"Yes, father, you are right, be at ease, dear mother! The judges will see the difference between rascals who scale walls in order to rob, and an old soldier and his son, who,

at peril of their liberty, their life, their honor, have sought only to deliver unhappy victims."

"And if this language should not be heard," resumed Dagobert, "so much the worse for them! It will not be your son, or husband, who will be dishonored in the eyes of honest people. If they send us to the galleys, and we have courage to survive—the young and the old convict will wear their chains proudly—and the renegade marquis, the traitor priest, will bear more shame than we. So, forge without fear, my boy! There are things which the galleys themselves cannot disgrace—our good conscience and our honor! But now," he added, "two words with my good Mother Bunch. It grows late, and time presses. On entering the garden, did you remark if the windows of the convent were far from the ground?"

"No, not very far, M. Dagobert—particularly on that side which is opposite to the madhouse, where Mdlle. de Cardoville is confined."

"How did you manage to speak to that young lady?"

"She was on the other side of an open paling, which separates the two gardens."

"Excellent!" said Agricola, as he continued to hammer the iron: "we can easily pass from one garden to the other. The madhouse may perhaps be the readier way out. Unfortunately, you do not know Mdlle. de Cardoville's chamber."

"Yes, I do," returned the work-girl, recollecting herself. "She is lodged in one of the wings, and there is a shade over her window, painted like canvas, with blue and white stripes."

"Good! I shall not forget that."

"And can you form no guess as to where are the rooms of my poor children?" said Dagobert.

After a moment's reflection, Mother Bunch answered: "They are opposite to the chamber occupied by Mdlle. de Cardoville, for she makes signs to them from her window: and I now remember she told me, that their two rooms are on different stories, one on the ground-floor, and the other up one pair of stairs."

"Are these windows grated?" asked the smith.

"I do not know."

"Never mind, my good girl; with these indications, we shall do very well," said Dagobert. "For the rest, I have my plans."

"Some water, my little sister," said Agricola, "that I may

cool my iron." Then addressing his father: "Will this hook do?"

"Yes, my boy; as soon as it is cold we will fasten the cord."

For some time, Frances Baudoin had remained upon her knees, praying with fervor. She implored Heaven to have pity on Agricola and Dagobert, who, in their ignorance, were about to commit a great crime; and she entreated that the celestial vengeance might fall upon her only, as she alone had been the cause of the fatal resolution of her son and husband.

Dagobert and Agricola finished their preparations in silence. They were both very pale, and solemnly grave. They felt all the danger of so desperate an enterprise.

The clock at Saint-Méry's struck ten. The sound of the bell was faint, and almost drowned by the lashing of the wind and rain, which had not ceased for a moment.

"Ten o'clock!" said Dagobert, with a start. "There is not a minute to lose. Take the sack, Agricola."

"Yes, father."

As he went to fetch the sack, Agricola approached Mother Bunch, who was hardly able to sustain herself, and said to her in a rapid whisper: "If we are not here to-morrow, take care of my mother. Go to M. Hardy, who will perhaps have returned from his journey. Courage, my sister! embrace me. I leave poor mother to you." The smith, deeply affected, pressed the almost fainting girl in his arms.

"Come, old Spoil-sport," said Dagobert: "you shall be our scout." Approaching his wife, who, just risen from the ground, was clasping her son's head to her bosom, and covering it with tears and kisses, he said to her, with a semblance of calmness and serenity: "Come, my dear wife, be reasonable! Make us a good fire. In two or three hours we will bring home the two poor children, and a fine young lady. Kiss me! that will bring me luck."

Frances threw herself on her husband's neck, without uttering a word. This mute despair, mingled with convulsive sobs, was heart-rending. Dagobert was obliged to tear himself from his wife's arms, and striving to conceal his emotion, he said to his son, in an agitated voice: "Let us go—she unmans me. Take care of her, my good Mother Bunch. Agricola—come!"

The soldier slipped the pistols into the pocket of his great coat, and rushed towards the door, followed by Spoil-sport.

"My son, let me embrace you once more—alas! it is per-

haps for the last time!" cried the unfortunate mother, incapable of rising, but stretching out her arms to Agricola. "Forgive me! it is all my fault."

The smith turned back, mingled his tears with those of his mother—for he also wept—and murmured, in a stifled voice: "Adieu, dear mother! Be comforted. We shall soon meet again."

Then, escaping from the embrace, he joined his father upon the stairs.

Frances Baudoin heaved a long sigh, and fell almost lifeless into the needlewoman's arms.

Dagobert and Agricola left the Rue Brise-Miche in the height of the storm, and hastened with great strides towards the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, followed by the dog.

CHAPTER XIII.

BURGLARY.

HALF-PAST eleven had just struck, when Dagobert and his son arrived on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital.

The wind blew violently, and the rain fell down in torrents, but notwithstanding the thickness of the watery clouds, it was tolerably light, thanks to the late rising of the moon. The tall, dark trees, and the white walls of the convent-garden, were distinguishable in the midst of the pale glimmer. Afar off, a street lamp, acted on by the wind, with its red lights hardly visible through the mist and rain, swung backwards and forwards over the dirty causeway of the solitary boulevard.

At rare intervals, they heard, at a very great distance, the rattle and rumble of a coach, returning home late; then all was again silent.

Since their departure from the Rue Brise-Miche, Dagobert and his son had hardly exchanged a word. The design of these two brave men was noble and generous, and yet, resolute but pensive, they glided through the darkness like bandits, at the hour of nocturnal crimes.

Agricola carried on his shoulders the sack containing the cord, the hook, and the iron bar; Dagobert leaned upon the arm of his son, and Spoil-sport followed his master.

"The bench, where we sat down, must be close by," said Dagobert, stopping.

"Yes," said Agricola, looking around; "here it is, father."

"It is only half-past eleven—we must wait for midnight," resumed Dagobert. "Let us be seated for an instant, to rest ourselves, and decide upon our plan."

After a moment's silence, the soldier took his son's hands between his own, and thus continued: "Agricola, my child—it is yet time. Let me go alone, I entreat you. I shall know very well how to get through the business; but the nearer the moment comes, the more I fear to drag you into this dangerous enterprise."

"And the nearer the moment comes, father, the more I feel I may be of some use; but, be it good or bad, I will share the fortune of your adventure. Our object is praiseworthy; it is a debt of honor that you have to pay, and I will take one half of it. Do not fancy that I will now draw back. And so, dear father, let us think of our plan of action."

"Then you *will* come?" said Dagobert, stifling a sigh.

"We must do everything," proceeded Agricola, "to secure success. You have already noticed the little garden-door, near the angle of the wall—that is excellent."

"We shall get by that way into the garden, and look immediately for the open paling."

"Yes; for on one side of this paling is the wing inhabited by Mdlle. de Cardoville, and on the other that part of the convent in which the general's daughters are confined."

At this moment, Spoil-sport, who was crouching at Dagobert's feet, rose suddenly, and pricked up his ears, as if to listen.

"One would think that Spoil-sport heard something," said Agricola. They listened—but heard only the wind, sounding through the tall trees of the boulevard.

"Now I think of it, father—when the garden-door is once open, shall we take Spoil-sport with us?"

"Yes; for if there is a watch-dog, he will settle him. And then he will give us notice of the approach of those who go the rounds. Besides, he is so intelligent, so attached to Rose and Blanche, that (who knows?) he may help to discover the place where they are. Twenty times I have seen him find them in the woods, by the most extraordinary instinct."

A slow and solemn knell here rose above the noise of the wind: it was the first stroke of twelve.

That note seemed to echo mournfully through the souls

of Agricola and his father. Mute with emotion, they shuddered, and by a spontaneous movement, each grasped the hand of the other. In spite of themselves, their hearts kept time to every stroke of the clock, as each successive vibration was prolonged through the gloomy silence of the night.

At the last stroke, Dagobert said to his son, in a firm voice: "It is midnight. Shake hands, and let us forward!"

The moment was decisive and solemn. "Now, father," said Agricola, "we will act with as much craft and daring as thieves going to pillage a strong box."

So saying, the smith took from the sack the cord and hook; Dagobert armed himself with the iron bar, and both advanced cautiously, following the wall in the direction of the little door, situated not far from the angle formed by the street and the boulevard. They stopped from time to time, to listen attentively, trying to distinguish those noises which were not caused either by the high wind or the rain.

It continued light enough for them to be able to see surrounding objects, and the smith and the soldier soon gained the little door, which appeared much decayed, and not very strong.

"Good!" said Agricola to his father. "It will yield at one blow."

The smith was about to apply his shoulder vigorously to the door, when Spoil-sport growled hoarsely, and made a "point." Dagobert silenced the dog with a word, and grasping his son's arm, said to him in a whisper: "Do not stir. The dog has scented some one in the garden."

Agricola and his father remained for some minutes motionless, holding their breath and listening. The dog, in obedience to his master, no longer growled, but his uneasiness and agitation were displayed more and more. Yet they heard nothing.

"The dog must have been deceived, father," whispered Agricola.

"I am sure of the contrary. Do not move."

After some seconds of expectation, Spoil-sport crouched down abruptly, and pushed his nose as far as possible under the door, snuffing up the air.

"They are coming," said Dagobert hastily, to his son.

"Let us draw off a little distance," replied Agricola.

"No," said his father; "we must listen. It will be time to retire, if they open the door. Here, Spoil-sport! down!"

The dog obeyed, and withdrawing from the door, crouched down at the feet of his master. Some seconds after, they

heard a sort of splashing on the damp ground, caused by heavy footsteps in puddles of water, and then the sound of words, which, carried away by the wind, did not reach distinctly the ears of the soldier and the smith.

"They are the people of whom Mother Bunch told us, going their round," said Agricola to his father.

"So much the better. There will be an interval before they come round again, and we shall have some two hours before us, without interruption. Our affair is all right now."

By degrees, the sound of the footsteps became less and less distinct, and at last died away altogether.

"Now, quick! we must not lose any time," said Dagobert to his son, after waiting about ten minutes; "they are far enough. Let us try to open the door."

Agricola leaned his powerful shoulder against it, and pushed vigorously; but the door did not give way, notwithstanding its age.

"Confound it!" said Agricola; "there is a bar on the inside. I am sure of it, or these old planks would not have resisted my weight."

"What is to be done?"

"I will scale the wall by means of the cord and hook, and open the door from the other side."

So saying, Agricola took the cord, and after several attempts, succeeded in fixing the hook on the coping of the wall.

"Now, father, give me a leg up; I will help myself up with the cord; once astride on the wall, I can easily turn the hook and get down into the garden."

The soldier leaned against the wall, and joined his two hands, in the hollow of which his son placed one of his feet, then mounting upon the robust shoulders of his father, he was able, by help of the cord, and some irregularities in the wall, to reach the top. Unfortunately, the smith had not perceived that the coping of the wall was strewed with broken bottles, so that he wounded his knees and hands; but, for fear of alarming Dagobert, he repressed every exclamation of pain, and replacing the hook, he glided down the cord to the ground. The door was close by, and he hastened to it; a strong wooden bar had indeed secured it on the inside. This was removed, and the lock was in so bad a state, that it offered no resistance to a violent effort from Agricola. The door was opened, and Dagobert entered the garden with Spoil-sport.

"Now," said the soldier to his son, "thanks to you, the

worst is over. Here is a means of escape for the poor children, and Mdlle. de Cardoville. The thing is now to find them, without accident or delay. Spoil-sport will go before as a scout. Come, my good dog!" added Dagobert, "above all—fair and softly!"

Immediately, the intelligent animal advanced a few steps, sniffing and listening with the care and caution of a hound searching for the game.

By the half-light of the clouded moon, Dagobert and his son perceived round them a V-shaped grove of tall trees, at which several paths met. Uncertain which to choose, Agricola said to his father: "Let us take the path that runs alongside the wall. It will surely lead to some building."

"Right! Let us walk on the strips of grass, instead of through the mud. It will make less noise."

The father and son, preceded by the Siberian dog, kept for some time in a winding path, at no great distance from the wall. They stopped now and then to listen, or to satisfy themselves, before continuing their advance, with regard to the changing aspects of the trees and bushes, which, shaken by the wind, and faintly illumined by the pale light of the moon, often took strange and doubtful forms.

Half-past twelve struck as Agricola and his father reached a large iron gate which shut in that part of the garden reserved for the Superior—the same into which Mother Bunch had intruded herself, after seeing Rose Simon converse with Adrienne de Cardoville.

Through the bars of this gate, Agricola and his father perceived at a little distance an open paling, which joined a half-finished chapel, and beyond it a little square building.

"That is no doubt the building occupied by Mdlle. de Cardoville," said Agricola.

"And the building which contains the chambers of Rose and Blanche, but which we cannot see from here, is no doubt opposite it," said Dagobert. "Poor children! they are there, weeping tears of despair," added he, with profound emotion.

"Provided the gate be but open," said Agricola.

"It will probably be so—being within the walls."

"Let us go on gently."

The gate was only fastened by the catch of the lock. Dagobert was about to open it, when Agricola said to him: "Take care! do not make it creak on its hinges."

"Shall I push it slowly or suddenly?"

"Let me manage it," said Agricola; and he opened the

gate so quickly, that it creaked very little; still the noise might have been plainly heard, in the silence of the night, during one of the lulls between the squalls of wind.

Agricola and his father remained motionless for a moment, listening uneasily, before they ventured to pass through the gate. Nothing stirred, however; all remained calm and still. With fresh courage, they entered the reserved garden.

Hardly had the dog arrived on this spot, when he exhibited tokens of extraordinary delight. Pricking up his ears, wagging his tail, bounding rather than running, he had soon reached the paling where, in the morning, Rose Simon had for a moment conversed with Mdlle. de Cardoville. He stopped an instant at this place, as if at fault, and turned round and round like a dog seeking the scent.

Dagobert and his son, leaving Spoil-sport to his instinct, followed his least movements with intense interest, hoping everything from his intelligence and his attachment to the orphans.

"It was no doubt near this paling that Rose stood when Mother Bunch saw her," said Dagobert. "Spoilsport is on her track. Let him alone."

After a few seconds, the dog turned his head towards Dagobert, and started at full trot in the direction of a door on the ground-floor of a building, opposite to that occupied by Adrienne. Arrived at this door, the dog lay down, seemingly waiting for Dagobert.

"No doubt of it! the children are there!" said Dagobert, hastening to rejoin Spoil-sport; it was by this door that they took Rose into the house."

"We must see if the windows are grated," said Agricola, following his father.

"Well, old fellow!" whispered the soldier, as he came up to the dog and pointed to the building, "are Rose and Blanche there?"

The dog lifted his head, and answered by a joyful bark. Dagobert had just time to seize the mouth of the animal with his hands.

"He will ruin all!" exclaimed the smith. "They have, perhaps, heard him."

"No," said Dagobert. "But there is no longer any doubt —the children are here."

At this instant, the iron gate, by which the soldier and his son had entered the reserved garden, and which they had left open, fell to with a loud noise.

"They've shut us in," said Agricola, hastily; "and there is no other issue."

For a moment, the father and son looked in dismay at each other; but Agricola instantly resumed: "The gate has perhaps shut of itself. I will make haste to assure myself of this, and to open it again if possible."

"Go quickly; I will examine the windows."

Agricola flew towards the gate, whilst Dagobert, gliding along the wall, soon reached the windows on the ground floor. They were four in number, and two of them were not grated. He looked up at the first story; it was not very far from the ground, and none of the windows had bars. It would then be easy for that one of the two sisters, who inhabited this story, once informed of their presence, to let herself down by means of a sheet, as the orphans had already done to escape from the inn of the White Falcon. But the difficult thing was to know which room she occupied. Dagobert thought they might learn this from the sister on the ground floor; but then there was another difficulty—at which of the four windows should they knock?

Agricola returned precipitately. "It was the wind, no doubt, which shut the gate," said he. "I have opened it again, and made it fast with a stone. But we have no time to lose."

"And how shall we know the windows of the poor children?" said Dagobert, anxiously.

"That is true," said Agricola, with uneasiness. "What is to be done?"

"To call them at hap-hazard," continued Dagobert, "would be to give the alarm."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Agricola, with increasing anguish. "To have arrived here, under their windows, and yet not to know!"

"Time presses," said Dagobert, hastily, interrupting his son; "we must run all risks."

"But how, father?"

"I will call out loud, "Rose and Blanche"—in their state of despair, I am sure they do not sleep. They will be stirring at my first summons. By means of a sheet, fastened to the window, she who is on the first story will in five minutes be in our arms. As for the one on the ground floor—if her window is not grated, we can have her in a second. If it is, we shall soon loosen one of the bars."

"But, father—this calling out aloud?"

"Will not perhaps be heard."

"But if it is heard—all will be lost."

"Who knows? Before they have time to call the watch, and open several doors, the children may be delivered. Once at the entrance of the boulevard, and we shall be safe."

"It is a dangerous course; but I see no other."

"If there are only two men, I and Spoil-sport will keep them in check, while you will have time to carry off the children."

"Father, there is a better way—a surer one," cried Agricola, suddenly. "From what Mother Bunch told us, Mdlle. de Cardoville has corresponded by signs with Rose and Blanche."

"Yes"

"Hence she knows where they are lodged, as the poor children answered her from their windows."

"You are right. There is only that course to take. But how find her room?"

"Mother Bunch told me there was a shade over the window."

"Quick! we have only to break through a wooden fence. Have you the iron bar?"

"Here it is."

"Then, quick!"

In a few steps, Dagobert and his son had reached the paling. Three planks, torn away by Agricola, opened an easy passage.

"Remain here, father, and keep watch," said he to Dagobert, as he entered Dr. Baleinier's garden.

The indicated window was easily recognized. It was high and broad; a sort of shade surmounted it, for this window had once been a door, since walled in to the third of its height. It was protected by bars of iron, pretty far apart. Since some minutes, the rain had ceased. The moon, breaking through the clouds, shone full upon the building. Agricola, approaching the window, saw that the room was perfectly dark; but light came from a room beyond, through a door left half open. The smith, hoping that Mdlle. de Cardoville might be still awake, tapped lightly at the window. Soon after, the door in the background opened entirely, and Mdlle. de Cardoville, who had not yet gone to bed, came from the other chamber, dressed as she had been at her interview with Mother Bunch. Her charming features were visible by the light of the taper she held in her hand. Their present expression was that of surprise and anxiety. The young girl set down the candlestick on the table, and appeared to

listen attentively as she approached the window. Suddenly she started, and stopped abruptly. She had just discerned the face of a man, looking at her through the window. Agricola, fearing that Mdlle. de Cardoville would retire in terror to the next room, again tapped on the glass, and running the risk of being heard by others, said in a pretty loud voice: "It is Agricola Baudoin."

These words reached the ears of Adrienne. Instantly remembering her interview with Mother Bunch, she thought that Agricola and Dagobert must have entered the convent for the purpose of carrying off Rose and Blanche. She ran to the window, recognized Agricola in the clear moonlight, and cautiously opened the casement.

"Madame," said the smith, hastily; "there is not an instant to lose. The Count de Montbron is not in Paris. My father and myself have come to deliver you."

"Thanks, thanks, M. Agricola!" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a tone expressive of the most touching gratitude; "but think first of the daughters of General Simon."

"We do think of them, madame, I have come to ask you which are their windows."

"One is on the ground floor, the last on the garden-side; the other is exactly over it, on the first story."

"Then they are saved!" cried the smith.

"But let me see!" resumed Adrienne, hastily; "the first story is pretty high. You will find, near the chapel they are building, some long poles belonging to the scaffolding. They may be of use to you."

"They will be as good as a ladder, to reach the upstairs window. But now to think of you, madame."

"Think only of the dear orphans. Time presses. Provided they are delivered to-night, it makes little difference to me to remain a day or two longer in this house."

"No, mademoiselle," cried the smith, "it is of the first importance that you should leave this place to-night. Interests are concerned, of which you know nothing. I am now sure of it."

"What do you mean?"

"I have not time to explain myself further; but I conjure you, madame, to come. I can wrench out two of these bars: I will fetch a piece of iron——"

"It is not necessary. They are satisfied with locking the outer door of this building, which I inhabit alone. You can easily break open the lock."

"And, in ten minutes, we shall be on the boulevard,"

said the smith. "Make yourself ready, madame; take a shawl, a bonnet, for the night is cold. I will return instantly."

"M. Agricola," said Adrienne, with tears in her eyes, "I know what you risk for my sake. I shall prove to you, I hope, that I have as good a memory as you have. You and your adopted sister are noble and valiant creatures, and I am proud to be indebted to you. But do not return for me till the daughters of Marshal Simon are in safety."

"Thanks to your directions, the thing will be done directly, madame. I fly to rejoin my father, and we will come together to fetch you"

Following the excellent advice of Mdlle. de Cardoville, Agricola took one of the long, strong poles that rested against the wall of the chapel, and, bearing it on his robust shoulders, hastened to rejoin his father. Hardly had Agricola passed the fence, to direct his steps towards the chapel, obscured in shadow, than Mdlle. de Cardoville thought she perceived a human form issue from one of the clumps of trees in the convent-garden, cross the path hastily, and disappear behind a high hedge of box. Alarmed at the sight, Adrienne in vain called to Agricola in a low voice, to bid him beware. He could not hear her; he had already rejoined his father, who, devoured by impatience, went from window to window with ever-increasing anguish.

"We are saved," whispered Agricola. "Those are the windows of the poor children—one on the ground floor, the other on the first story."

"At last!" said Dagobert, with a burst of joy impossible to describe. He ran to examine the windows. "They are not grated!" he exclaimed.

"Let us make sure, that one of them is there," said Agricola; "then, by placing this pole against the wall, I will climb up to the first story, which is not so very high."

"Right, my boy!—once there, tap at the window, and call Rose or Blanche. When she answers, come down. We will rest the pole against the window, and the poor child will slide along it. They are bold and active. Quick, quick! to work!"

"And then we will deliver Mdlle. de Cardoville."

Whilst Agricola placed his pole against the wall, and prepared to mount, Dagobert tapped at the panes of the last window on the ground floor, and said aloud: "It is I—Dagobert."

Rose Simon indeed occupied the chamber. The unhappy

child, in despair at being separated from her sister, was a prey to a burning fever, and, unable to sleep, watered her pillow with her tears. At the sound of the tapping on the glass, she started up affrighted, then, hearing the voice of the soldier—that voice so familiar and so dear—she sat up in bed, pressed her hands across her forehead, to assure herself that she was not the plaything of a dream, and, wrapped in her long night-dress, ran to the window with a cry of joy But suddenly—and before she could open the casement—two reports of fire-arms were heard, accompanied by loud cries of "Help! thieves!"

The orphan stood petrified with terror, her eyes mechanically fixed upon the window, through which she saw confusedly, by the light of the moon, several men engaged in a mortal struggle, whilst the furious barking of Spoil-sport was heard above all the incessant cries of "Help! Help! Thieves! Murder!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EVE OF A GREAT DAY.

About two hours before the event last related took place at St. Mary's Convent, Rodin and Abbé d'Aigrigny met in the room where we have already seen them, in the Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins. Since the Revolution of July, Father d'Aigrigny had thought proper to remove for the moment to this temporary habitation all the secret archives and correspondence of his Order—a prudent measure, since he had every reason to fear that the reverend fathers would be expelled by the state from that magnificent establishment, with which the restoration had so liberally endowed their society.*

* This was an idle fear, for we read in the *Constitutionnel*, Feb. 1st, 1832, as follows: "When, in 1822, M. de Corbière abruptly abolished that splendid Normal School, which, during its few years' existence, had called forth or developed such a variety of talent, it was decided, as some compensation, that a house in the Rue des Postes should be purchased, where the congregation of the Holy Ghost should be located and endowed. The Minister of Marine supplied the funds for this purpose, and its management was placed at the disposal of the Society, which then reigned over France. From that period it has held quiet possession of the place, which at once became a sort of house of entertainment, where Jesuitism sheltered, and provided for, the numerous noviciates that flocked from all parts of the country, to receive instructions from

Rodin, dressed in his usual sordid style, mean and dirty as ever, was writing modestly at his desk, faithful to his

Father Ronsin. Matters were in this state when the Revolution of July broke out, which threatened to deprive the Society of this establishment. But it will hardly be believed ; this was not done. It is true that they suppressed their practice, but they left them in possession of the house in the Rue des Postes ; and to this very day, the 31st of January, 1832, the members of the Sacred Heart are housed at the expense of government, during the whole of which time the Normal School has been without a shelter—and, on its reorganization, thrust into a dirty hole, in a narrow corner of the College of Louis the Great."

The above appeared in the *Constitutionnel*, respecting the house in the Rue des Postes. We are certainly ignorant as to the nature of the transactions, since that period, that have taken place between the reverend fathers and the government ; but we read further, in a recently published article that appeared in a journal, in reference to the Society of Jesus, that the house in the Rue des Postes, still forms a part of their landed property. We will here give some portions of the article in question.

"The following is a list of the property belonging to this branch of Jesuits :

	Fr.
House in the Rue des Postes, worth about . .	500,000
One in the Rue de Sèvres, estimated at . .	300,000
Farm, two leagues from Paris	150,000
House and church at Bourges	100,000
Nôtre Dame de Liesse, donation in 1843 . .	60,000
Saint Acheul, House for Novitiates . . .	400,000
Nantes, a house	100,000
Quimper, ditto	40,000
Laval, house and church, ...	150,000
Rennes, a house	20,000
Vannes, ditto	20,000
Metz, ditto	40,000
Strasbourg	60,000
Rouen, ditto	15,000

By this it appears that these various items amount to little less than two millions. Teaching, moreover, is another important source of revenue to the Jesuits. The college at Broyclette alone brings in 200,000 francs. The two provinces in France (for the general of the Jesuits at Rome has divided France into two provinces, Lyons and Paris) possess, besides a large sum in ready money, Austrian bonds of more than 200,000 francs. Their Propagation of Faith furnishes annually some 50,000 francs ; and the harvest which the priests collect by their sermons amounts to 150,000 francs. The alms given for charity may be estimated at the same figure, producing together a revenue of 540,000 francs. Now, to this revenue may be added the produce of the sale of the Society's works, and the profit obtained by hawking pictures. Each plate costs, design and engraving included, about 600 francs, off which are struck about 10,000 copies, at 40 francs per thousand, and there is a further expense of 250 francs to their publisher ; and they obtain a net profit of 240 francs on every thousand. This, indeed, is working to advantage. And it can easily be imagined with what rapidity all these are sold. The fathers themselves are the travellers for the Society, and it would be

humble part of secretary, which concealed, as we have already seen, a far more important office—that of Socius—a function which, according to the constitutions of the Order, consists in never quitting his superior, watching his least actions, spying into his very thoughts, and reporting all to Rome.

In spite of his usual impassibility, Rodin appeared visibly uneasy and absent in mind; he answered even more briefly than usual to the commands and questions of Father d'Aigrigny, who had but just entered the room.

"Has anything new occurred during my absence?" asked he. "Are the reports still favorable?"

"Very favorable."

"Read them to me."

"Before giving this account to your reverence," said Rodin, "I must inform you that Morok has been two days in Paris."

"Morok?" said Abbé d'Aigrigny, with surprise. "I thought, on leaving Germany and Switzerland, he had received from Friburg the order to proceed southward. At Nismes, or Avignon, he would at this moment be useful as an agent; for the Protestants begin to move, and we fear a reaction against the Catholics."

"I do not know," said Rodin, "if Morok may not have had private reasons for changing his route. His ostensible reasons are, that he comes here to give performances."

"How so?"

"A dramatic agent, passing through Lyons, engaged him and his menagerie for the Port Saint-Martin Theatre at a very high price. He says that he did not like to refuse such an offer."

"Well," said Father d'Aigrigny, shrugging his shoulders, "but, by distributing his little books, and selling prints and chaplets, as well as by the influence he would certainly exercise over the pious and ignorant people of the South or

difficult to find more zealous or persevering ones. They are always well received, and do not know what it is to meet with a refusal. They always take care that the publisher should be one of their own body. The first person whom they selected for this occupation was one of their members, possessing some money; but they were obliged, notwithstanding, to make certain advances to enable him to defray the expenses of its first establishment. But, when they became fully convinced of the success of their undertaking, they suddenly called in these advances, which the publisher was not in a condition to pay. They were perfectly aware of this, and superseded him by a wealthy successor, with whom they could make a better bargain; and thus, without remorse, they ruined the man, by thrusting him from an appointment of which they had morally guaranteed the continuance."

of Brittany, he might render services, such as he can never perform in Paris."

"He is now below, with a kind of giant, who travels about with him. In his capacity of your reverence's old servant, Morok hoped to have the honor of kissing your hand this evening."

"Impossible—impossible—you know how much I am occupied. Have you sent to the Rue Saint-François?"

"Yes, I have. The old Jew guardian has had notice from the notary. To-morrow, at six in the morning, the masons will unwall the door, and, for the first time since one hundred and fifty years, the house will be opened."

Father d'Aigrigny remained in thought for a moment, and then said to Rodin: "On the eve of such a decisive day, we must neglect nothing, and call every circumstance to memory. Read me the copy of the note, inserted in the archives of the society, a century and a half ago, on the subject of Rennepont."

The secretary took the note from the case, and read as follows:

"'This 19th day of February, 1682, the Reverend Father-Provincial Alexander Bourdon sent the following advice, with these words in the margin: Of extreme importance for the future.

"'We have just discovered, by the confession of a dying person to one of our fathers, a very close secret.

"'Marius de Rennepont, one of the most active and redoubtable partisans of the Reformed Religion, and one of the most determined enemies of our Holy Society, had apparently re-entered the pale of our Mother-Church, but with the sole design of saving his worldly goods, threatened with confiscation because of his irreligious and damnable errors. Evidence having been furnished by different persons of our company to prove that the conversion of Rennepont was not sincere, and in reality covered a sacrilegious lure, the possessions of the said gentleman, now considered a relapsed heretic, were confiscated by our gracious sovereign, his Majesty King Louis XIV, and the said Rennepont was condemned to the galleys for life.* He escaped his doom by a voluntary death; in consequence of which abominable crime,

* Louis XIV., the great King, punished with the galleys those Protestants who, once converted, often by force, afterwards returned to their first belief. As for those Protestants who remained in France, notwithstanding the rigor of the edicts against them, they were deprived of burial, dragged upon a hurdle, and given to the dogs.—E. S.

his body was dragged upon a hurdle, and flung to the dogs on the highway.

"'From these preliminaries, we come to the great secret, which is of such importance to the future interests of our Society.

"'His Majesty Louis XIV., in his paternal and Catholic goodness towards the Church in general, and our Order in particular, had granted to us the profit of this confiscation, in acknowledgment of our services in discovering the infamous and sacrilegious relapse of the said Rennepont.

"'But we have just learned, for certain, that a house situated in Paris, No. 3, Rue Saint-François, and a sum of fifty thousand gold crowns, have escaped this confiscation, and have consequently been stolen from our Society.

"'The house was conveyed, before the confiscation, by means of a feigned purchase, to a friend of Rennepont's—a good Catholic, unfortunately, as against him we cannot take any severe measures. Thanks to the culpable, but secure connivance of his friend, the house has been walled up, and is only to be opened in a century and a half, according to the last will of Rennepont. As for the fifty thousand gold crowns, they have been placed in hands which, unfortunately, are hitherto unknown to us, in order to be invested and put out to use for one hundred and fifty years, at the expiration of which time they are to be divided between the then existing descendants of the said Rennepont; and it is calculated that this sum, increased by so many accumulations, will by then have become enormous, and will amount to at least forty or fifty millions of livres *tournois*. From motives which are not known, but which are duly stated in a testamentary document, the said Rennepont has concealed from his family, whom the edicts against the Protestants have driven out of France, the investment of these fifty thousand crowns; and has only desired his relations to preserve in their line from generation to generation, the charge to the last survivors, to meet in Paris, Rue Saint-François, a hundred and fifty years hence, on February the 13th, 1832. And that this charge might not be forgotten, he employed a person, whose description is known, but not his real occupation, to cause to be manufactured sundry bronze medals, on which the request and date are engraved, and to deliver one to each member of the family—a measure the more necessary, as, from some other motive equally unknown, but probably explained in the testament, the heirs are to present themselves on the day in question, before noon, in person, and not by any attorney or representative, or to forfeit all

claim to the inheritance. The stranger who undertook to distribute the medals to the different members of the family of Rennepont is a man of thirty to thirty-six years of age, of tall stature, and with a proud and sad expression of countenance. He has black eyebrows, very thick, and singularly joined together. He is known as JOSEPH, and is much suspected of being an active and dangerous emissary of the wretched republicans and heretics of the Seven United Provinces. It results from these premises, that this sum, surreptitiously confided by a relapsed heretic to unknown hands, has escaped the confiscation decreed in our favor by our well-beloved king. A serious fraud and injury has therefore been committed, and we are bound to take every means to recover this our right, if not immediately, at least in some future time. Our Society being (for the greater glory of God and our Holy Father) imperishable, it will be easy, thanks to the connections we keep up with all parts of the world, by means of missions and other establishments, to follow the line of this family of Rennepont from generation to generation, without ever losing sight of it—so that a hundred and fifty years hence, at the moment of the division of this immense accumulation of property, our Company may claim the inheritance of which it has been so treacherously deprived, and recover it by any means in its power, *fas aut nefas*, even by craft or violence —our Company not being bound to act tenderly with the future detainers of our goods, of which we have been maliciously deprived by an infamous and sacrilegious heretic—and because it is right to defend, preserve, and recover one's own property by every means which the Lord may place within one's reach. Until, therefore, the complete restitution of this wealth, the family of Rennepont must be considered as reprobate and damnable, as the cursed seed of a Cain, and always to be watched with the utmost caution. And it is to be recommended, that, every year from this present date, a sort of inquisition should be held as to the situation of the successive members of this family.' "

Rodin paused, and said to Father d'Aigrigny: "Here follows the account, year by year, of the history of this family, from the year 1682, to our own day. It will be useless to read this to your reverence."

"Quite useless," said Abbé d'Aigrigny. "The note contains all the important facts." Then, after a moment's silence, he exclaimed, with an expression of triumphant pride: "How great is the power of the Association, when founded upon tradition and perpetuity! Thanks to this

note, inserted in our archives a century and a half ago, this family has been watched from generation to generation—our Order has always had its eyes upon them, following them to all points of the globe, to which exile had distributed them—and at last, to-morrow, we shall obtain possession of this property, at first inconsiderable, but which a hundred and fifty years have raised to a royal fortune. Yes, we shall succeed, for we have foreseen every eventuality. One thing only troubles me."

"What is that?" asked Rodin.

"The information that we have in vain tried to obtain from the guardian of the house in the Rue Saint-François. Has the attempt been once more made, as I directed?"

"It has been made."

"Well?"

"This time, as always before, the old Jew has remained impenetrable. Besides he is almost in his second childhood, and his wife not much better."

"When I think," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, "that for a century and a half, this house in the Rue Saint-François has remained walled up, and that the care of it has been transmitted from generation to generation in this family of the Samuels—I cannot suppose that they have all been ignorant as to who were and are the successive holders of these funds, now become immense by accumulation."

"You have seen," said Rodin, "by the notes upon this affair, that the Order has always carefully followed it up ever since 1682. At different periods attempts have been made to obtain information upon subjects not fully explained in the note of Father Bourdon. But this race of Jew guardians has ever remained dumb, and we must therefore conclude that they know nothing about it."

"That has always struck me as impossible; for the ancestor of these Samuels was present at the closing of the house, a hundred and fifty years ago. He was according to the file, a servant or confidential clerk of De Rennepont. It is impossible that he should not have known many things, the tradition of which must have been preserved in the family."

"If I were allowed to hazard a brief observation," began Rodin, humbly.

"Speak."

"A few years ago we obtained certain information through the confessional, that the funds were in existence, and that they had risen to an enormous amount."

"Doubtless; and it was that which called the attention of the Reverend Father-General so strongly to this affair."

"We know, then, what probably the descendants of the family do not—the immense value of this inheritance?"

"Yes," answered Father d'Aigrigny, "the person who certified this fact in confession is worthy of all belief. Only lately, the same declaration was renewed; but all the efforts of the confessor could not obtain the name of the trustee, or anything beyond the assertion, that the money could not be in more honest hands."

"It seems to me, then," resumed Rodin, "that we are certain of what is most important."

"And who knows if the holder of this enormous sum will appear to-morrow, in spite of the honesty ascribed to him? The nearer the moment the more my anxiety increases. Ah!" continued Father d'Aigrigny, after a moment's silence, "the interests concerned are so immense that the consequences of success are quite incalculable. However, all that it was possible to do, has been at least tried."

To these words, which Father d'Aigrigny addressed to Rodin, as if asking for his assent, the *socius* returned no answer.

The abbé looked at him with surprise, and said: "Are you not of my opinion—could more have been attempted? Have we not gone to the extreme limit of the possible?"

Rodin bowed respectfully, but remained mute.

"If you think we have omitted some precaution," cried Father d'Aigrigny, with a sort of uneasy impatience, "speak out! We have still time. Once more, do you think it is possible to do more than I have done? All the other descendants being removed, when Gabriel appears to-morrow in the Rue Saint-François, will he not be the only representative of this family, and consequently the rightful possessor of this immense fortune? Now, according to his act of renunciation, and the provisions of our statutes, it is not to him, but to the Order, that these possessions must fall. Could I have acted better, or in any other manner? Speak frankly!"

"I cannot permit myself to offer an opinion on this subject," replied Rodin, humbly, and again bowing; "the success of the measures taken must answer your reverence."

Father d'Aigrigny shrugged his shoulders, and reproached himself for having asked advice of this writing-machine, that served him for a secretary, and to whom he only ascribed three qualities—memory, discretion, and exactness.

CHAPTER XV.

THE THUG.

After a moment's silence, Father d'Aigrigny resumed: "Read me to-day's report on the situation of each of the persons designated."

"Here is that of this evening; it has just come."

"Let us hear."

Rodin read as follows: "Jacques Rennepont, *alias* Sleep-inbuff, was seen in the interior of the debtors' prison at eight o'clock this evening."

"He will not disturb us to-morrow. One; go on."

"The lady superior of St. Mary's Convent, warned by the Princess de Saint-Dizier, has thought fit to confine still more strictly the Demoiselles Rose and Blanche Simon. This evening, at nine o'clock, they have been carefully locked in their cells, and armed men will make their round in the convent garden during the night."

"Thanks to these precautions, there is nothing to fear from that side," said Father d'Aigrigny. "Go on."

"Dr. Baleinier, also warned by the Princess de Saint-Dizier, continues to have Mdlle. de Cardoville very closely watched. At a quarter to nine the door of the building in which she is lodged was locked and bolted."

"That is still another cause the less for uneasiness."

"As for M. Hardy," resumed Rodin, "I have received this morning, from Toulouse, a letter from his intimate friend, M. de Bressac, who has been of such service to us in keeping the manufacturer away for some days longer. This letter contains a note, addressed by M. Hardy to a confidential person, which M. de Bressac has thought fit to intercept, and send to us as another proof of the success of the steps he has taken, and for which he hopes we shall give him credit—as to serve us, he adds, he betrays his friend in the most shameful manner, and acts a part in an odious comedy. M. de Bressac trusts that, in return for these good offices, we will deliver up to him those papers, which place him in our absolute dependence, as they might ruin for ever a woman he loves with an adulterous passion. He says that we ought to have pity on the horrible alternative in which he is placed—either to dishonor and ruin the woman

he adores, or infamously to betray the confidence of his bosom friend."

"These adulterous lamentations are not deserving of pity," answered Father d'Aigrigny, with contempt. "We will see about that; M. de Bressac may still be useful to us. But let us hear this letter of M. Hardy, that impious and republican manufacturer, worthy descendant of an accursed race, whom it is of the first importance to keep away."

"Here is M. Hardy's letter," resumed Rodin. "To-morrow, we will send it to the person to whom it is addressed."

Rodin read as follows:

"TOULOUSE, February the 10th.

"At length I find a moment to write to you, and to explain the cause of the sudden departure which, without alarming, must at least have astonished you. I write also to ask you a service; the facts may be stated in a few words. I have often spoken to you of Felix de Bressac, one of my boyhood mates, though not nearly so old as myself. We have always loved each other tenderly, and have shown too many proofs of mutual affection not to count upon one another. He is a brother to me. You know all I mean by that expression. Well—a few days ago, he wrote to me from Toulouse, where he was to spend some time: 'If you love me, come; I have the greatest need of you. At once! Your consolations may perhaps give me the courage to live. If you arrive too late—why, forgive me—and think sometimes of him who will be yours to the last.' Judge of my grief and fear on receipt of the above. I sent instantly for post-horses. My old foreman, whom I esteem and revere (the father of General Simon), hearing that I was going to the south, begged me to take him with me, and to leave him for some days in the department of the Creuse, to examine some ironworks recently founded there. I consented willingly to this proposition, as I should thus at least have some one to whom I could pour out the grief and anxiety which had been caused me by this letter from Bressac. I arrive at Toulouse; they tell me that he left the evening before, taking arms with him, a prey to the most violent despair. It was impossible at first to tell whither he had gone; after two days, some indications, collected with great trouble, put me upon his track. At last, after a thousand adventures, I found him in a miserable village. Never—no, never, have I seen despair like this. No violence, but a dreadful dejection, a savage silence. At first, he almost repulsed me; then, this horrible agony having reached its height, he softened by degrees, and, in about a quarter of an hour, threw himself into my arms, bathed in tears. Beside him were his loaded pistols; one day later, and all would have been over. I cannot tell you the reason of his despair; I am not at liberty to do so; but it did not greatly astonish me. Now there is a complete cure to effect. We must calm, and soothe, and heal this poor soul, which has been cruelly wounded. The hand of friendship is alone equal to this delicate task, and I have good hope of success. I have therefore persuaded him to travel for some time; movement and change of scene will be favorable to him. I shall take him first to Nice; we set out to-morrow. If he wishes to prolong this excursion, I shall do so too, for my affairs do not imperiously demand my presence in Paris before the end of March. As for the service I have to ask of you, it is conditional. These are the facts. According to some family papers that belonged to

my mother, it seems I have a certain interest to present myself at No. 3, Rue Saint François, in Paris, on the 13th of February. I had inquired about it, and could learn nothing, except that this house, of very antique appearance, has been shut up for the last hundred and fifty years, through a whim of one of my maternal ancestors, and that it is to be opened on the 13th of this month, in presence of the co-heirs, who, if I have any, are quite unknown to me. Not being able to attend myself, I have written to my foreman, the father of General Simon, in whom I have the greatest confidence, and whom I had left behind in the department of the Creuse, to set out for Paris, and to be present at the opening of this house, not as an agent (which would be useless), but as a spectator, and inform me at Nice what has been the result of this romantic notion of my ancestor's. As it is possible that my foreman may arrive too late to accomplish this mission, I should be much obliged if you would inquire at my house at Plessy, if he has yet come, and, in case of his still being absent, if you would take his place at the opening of the house in the Rue Saint-François. I believe that I have made a very small sacrifice for my friend Bressac, in not being in Paris on that day. But had the sacrifice been immense, I should have made it with pleasure, for my care and friendship are at present most necessary to the man whom I look upon as a brother. I count upon your compliance with my request, and, begging you to be kind enough to write me, 'to be called for,' at Nice, the result of your visit of inquiry, I remain, etc., etc.

"FRANCIS HARDY."

"Though his presence cannot be of any great importance, it would be preferable that Marshal Simon's father should not attend at the opening of this house to-morrow," said Father d'Aigrigny. "But no matter. M. Hardy himself is out of the way. There only remains the young Indian."

"As for him," continued the abbé, with a thoughtful air, "we acted wisely in letting M. Norval set out with the presents of Mdlle. de Cardoville. The doctor who accompanies M. Norval, and who was chosen by M. Baleinier, will inspire no suspicion?"

"None," answered Rodin. "His letter of yesterday is completely satisfactory."

"There is nothing, then, to fear from the Indian prince," said D'Aigrigny. "All goes well."

"As for Gabriel," resumed Rodin, "he has again written this morning, to obtain from your reverence the interview that he has vainly solicited for the last three days. He is affected by the rigor exercised towards him, in forbidding him to leave the house for these five days past."

"To-morrow, when we take him to the Rue Saint-François, I will hear what he has to say. It will be time enough. Thus, at this hour," said Father d'Aigrigny, with an air of triumphant satisfaction, "all the descendants of this family, whose presence might ruin our projects, are so placed that it is absolutely impossible for them to be at the Rue Saint-

François to-morrow before noon, while Gabriel will be sure to be there. At last our end is gained."

Two cautious knocks at the door interrupted Father d'Aigrigny. "Come in," said he.

An old servant in black presented himself, and said: "There is a man downstairs who wishes to speak instantly to M. Rodin on very urgent business."

"His name?" asked Father d'Aigrigny.

"He would not tell his name; but he says that he comes from M. Van Dael, a merchant in Java."

Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin exchanged a glance of surprise, almost of alarm.

"See what this man is," said D'Aigrigny to Rodin, unable to conceal his uneasiness, "and then come and give me an account of it." Then, addressing the servant, he added: "Show him in"—and exchanging another expressive sign with Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny disappeared by a side-door.

A minute after, Faringhea, the ex-chief of the Stranglers, appeared before Rodin, who instantly remembered having seen him at Cardoville Castle.

The *socius* started, but he did not wish to appear to recollect his visitor. Still bending over his desk, he seemed not to see Faringhea, but wrote hastily some words on a sheet of paper that lay before him.

"Sir," said the servant, astonished at the silence of Rodin, "here is the person."

Rodin folded the note that he had so precipitately written, and said to the servant: "Let this be taken to its address. Wait for an answer."

The servant bowed, and went out. Then Rodin, without rising, fixed his little reptile-eyes on Faringhea, and said to him courteously: "To whom, sir, have I the honor of speaking?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TWO BROTHERS OF THE GOOD WORK.

Faringhea, as we have before stated, though born in India, had travelled a good deal, and frequented the European factories in different parts of Asia. Speaking well both English and French, and full of intelligence and sagacity, he was perfectly civilized.

Instead of answering Rodin's question, he turned upon

him a fixed and searching look. The *socius*, provoked by this silence, and foreseeing vaguely that Faringhea's arrival had some connection—direct or indirect—with Djalma, repeated, though still with the greatest coolness: "To whom, sir, have I the honor of speaking?"

"Do you not recognize me," said Faringhea, advancing two steps nearer to Rodin's chair.

"I do not think I have ever had the honor of seeing you," answered the other, coldly.

"But I recognize you," said Faringhea; "I saw you at Cardoville Castle the day that a ship and a steamer were wrecked together."

"At Cardoville Castle? It is very possible, sir. I was there when a shipwreck took place."

"And that day I called you by your name, and you asked me what I wanted. I replied: 'Nothing *now*, brother—hereafter, much.' The time has arrived. I have come to ask for much."

"My dear sir," said Rodin, still impassible, "before we continue this conversation, which appears hitherto tolerably obscure, I must repeat my wish to be informed to whom I have the advantage of speaking. You have introduced yourself here under pretext of a commission from Mynheer Joshua Van Dael, a respectable merchant of Batavia, and——"

"You know the writing of M. Van Dael?" said Faringhea, interrupting Rodin.

"I know it perfectly."

"Look!" The half-caste drew from his pocket (he was shabbily dressed in European clothes) a long dispatch, which he had taken from one Mahal the Smuggler, after strangling him on the beach near Batavia. These papers he placed before Rodin's eyes, but without quitting his hold of them.

"It is, indeed, M. Van Dael's writing," said Rodin, and he stretched out his hand towards the letter, which Faringhea quickly and prudently returned to his pocket.

"Allow me to observe, my dear sir, that you have a singular manner of executing a commission," said Rodin. "This letter, being to my address, and having been entrusted to you by M. Van Dael, you ought——"

"This letter was not entrusted to me by M. Van Dael," said Faringhea, interrupting Rodin.

"How, then, is it in your possession?"

"A Javanese smuggler betrayed me. Van Dael had secured a passage to Alexandria for this man, and had given him this letter to carry with him for the European

mail. I strangled the smuggler, took the letter, made the passage—and here I am."

The Thug had pronounced these words with an air of savage boasting; his wild, intrepid glance did not quail before the piercing look of Rodin, who, at this strange confession, had hastily raised his head to observe the speaker.

Faringhea thought to astonish or intimidate Rodin by these ferocious words; but, to his great surprise, the *socius*, impassible as a corpse, said to him, quite simply: "Oh! they strangle people in Java?"

"Yes, there *and* elsewhere," answered Faringhea, with a bitter smile.

"I would prefer to disbelieve you; but I am surprised at your sincerity M. ——, what is your name?"

"Faringhea."

"Well, then, M. Faringhea, what do you wish to come to? You have obtained by an abominable crime, a letter addressed to me, and now you hesitate to deliver it——"

"Because I have read it, and it may be useful to me."

"Oh! you have read it?" said Rodin, disconcerted for a moment. Then he resumed: "It is true, that judging by your mode of possessing yourself of other people's correspondence, we cannot expect any great amount of honesty on your part. And pray what have you found so useful to you in this letter?"

"I have found, brother, that you are, like myself, a son of the Good Work."

"Of what good work do you speak?" asked Rodin not a little surprised.

Faringhea replied with an expression of bitter irony. "Joshua says to you in his letter—'Obedience and courage, secresy and patience, craft and audacity, union between us, who have the world for our country, the brethren for our family, Rome for our queen.'"

"It is possible that M. Van Dael has written thus to me. Pray, sir, what do you conclude from it?"

"We, too, have the world for our country, brother, our accomplices for our family, and for our queen Bowanee."

"I do not know that saint," said Rodin, humbly.

"It is *our* Rome," answered the Strangler. "Van Dael speaks to you of those of your Order, who, scattered over all the earth, labor for the glory of Rome, your queen. Those of our band labor also in divers countries, for the glory of Bowanee."

"And who are these sons of Bowanee, M. Faringhea?"

"Men of resolution, audacious, patient, crafty, obstinate,

who, to make the Good Work succeed, would sacrifice country and parents, and sister and brother, and who regard as enemies all not of their band!"

"There seems to be much that is good in the persevering and exclusively religious spirit of such an order," said Rodin, with a modest and sanctified air; "only, one must know your ends and objects."

"The same as your own, brother—we make corpses." *

"Corpses!" cried Rodin.

"In this letter," resumed Faringhea, "Van Dael tells you that the greatest glory of your Order is to make 'a corpse of man.' Our work also is to make corpses of men. Man's death is sweet to Bowanee."

"But, sir," cried Rodin, "M. Van Dael speaks of the soul, of the will, of the mind, which are to be brought down by discipline."

"It is true—you kill the soul, and we the body. Give me your hand, brother, for you also are hunters of men."

"But once more, sir,—understand, that we only meddle with the will, the mind," said Rodin.

"And what are bodies deprived of soul, will, thought, but mere corpses? Come—come, brother; the dead we make by the cord are not more icy and inanimate than those you make by your discipline. Take my hand, brother; Rome and Bowanee are sisters."

Notwithstanding his apparent calmness, Rodin could not behold, without some secret alarm, a wretch like Faringhea in possession of a long letter from Van Dael, wherein mention must necessarily have been made of Djalma. Rodin believed, indeed, that he had rendered it impossible for the young Indian to be at Paris on the morrow, but not knowing what connection might have been formed, since the shipwreck, between the prince and the half-caste, he looked upon Faringhea as a man who might probably be very dangerous. But the more uneasy the socius felt in himself, the more he affected to appear calm and disdainful. He replied, therefore: "This comparison between Rome and Bowanee is no doubt very amusing; but what, sir, do you deduce from it?"

"I wish to show you, brother, what I am, and of what I am capable, to convince you that it is better to have me for a friend than an enemy."

* The doctrine of passive and absolute obedience, the principal tool in the hands of the Jesuits, as summed up in these terrible words of the dying Loyola—*that every member of the order should be in the hands of his superiors as a dead body—perinde ad cadaver.*

"In other terms, sir," said Rodin, with contemptuous irony, "you belong to a murderous sect in India, and, you wish, by a transparent allegory, to lead me to reflect on the fate of the man from whom you have stolen the letter addressed to me. In my turn, I will take the freedom just to observe to you, in all humility, M. Faringhea, that here it is not permitted to strangle anybody, and that if you were to think fit to make any corpses for the love of Bowanee, your goddess, we should make you a head shorter, for the love of another divinity commonly called Justice."

"And what would they do to me, if I tried to poison any one?"

"I will again humbly observe to you, M. Faringhea, that I have no time to give you a course of criminal jurisprudence; but, believe me, you had better resist the temptation to strangle or poison any one. One word more: will you deliver up to me the letters of M. Van Dael, or not?"

"The letters relative to Prince Djalma?" said the half-caste, looking fixedly at Rodin, who, notwithstanding a sharp and sudden twinge, remained impenetrable, and answered with the utmost simplicity: "Not knowing what the letters which you, sir, are pleased to keep from me, may contain, it is impossible for me to answer your question. I beg, and if necessary, I demand, that you will hand me those letters—or that you will retire."

"In a few minutes, brother, you will entreat me to remain."

"I doubt it."

"A few words will operate this miracle. If just now I spoke to you about poisoning, brother, it was because you sent a doctor to Cardoville Castle, to poison (at least for a time) Prince Djalma."

In spite of himself, Rodin started almost imperceptibly, as he replied: "I do not understand you."

"It is true, that I am a poor foreigner, and doubtless speak with an accent; I will try and explain myself better. I know, by Van Dael's letters, the interest you have that Prince Djalma should not be here to-morrow, and all that you have done with this view. Do you understand me now?"

"I have no answer for you."

Two cautious taps at the door here interrupted the conversation. "Come in," said Rodin.

"The letter has been taken to its address, sir," said the old servant, bowing, "and here is the answer."

Rodin took the paper, and, before he opened it, said courteously to Faringhea: "With your permission, sir?"

"Make no ceremonies," said the half-caste.

"You are very kind," replied Rodin, as, having read the letter he received, he wrote hastily some words at the bottom, saying: "Send this back to the same address."

The servant bowed respectfully, and withdrew.

"Now can I continue?" asked the half-caste, of Rodin.

"Certainly."

"I will continue, then," resumed Faringhea:

"The day before yesterday, just as the prince, all wounded as he was, was about, by my advice, to take his departure for Paris, a fine carriage arrived, with superb presents for Djalma, from an unknown friend. In this carriage were two men—one sent by the unknown friend—the other a doctor, sent by you to attend upon Djalma, and accompany him to Paris. It was a charitable act, brother—was it not so?"

"Go on with your story, sir."

"Djalma set out yesterday. By declaring that the prince's wound would grow seriously worse, if he did not lie down in the carriage during all the journey, the doctor got rid of the envoy of the unknown friend, who went away by himself. The doctor wished to get rid of me too; but Djalma so strongly insisted upon it, that I accompanied the prince and doctor. Yesterday evening, we had come about half the distance. The doctor proposed we should pass the night at an inn. 'We have plenty of time,' said he, 'to reach Paris by to-morrow evening'—the prince having told him, that he must absolutely be in Paris by the evening of the 12th. The doctor had been very pressing to set out alone with the prince. I knew by Van Dael's letter, that it was of great importance to you for Djalma not to be here on the 13th; I had my suspicions, and I asked the doctor if he knew you; he answered with an embarrassed air, and then my suspicion became certainty. When we reached the inn, whilst the doctor was occupied with Djalma, I went up to the room of the former, and examined a box full of phials that he had brought with him. One of them contained opium—and then I guessed——"

"What did you guess, sir?"

"You shall know. The doctor said to Djalma, before he left him: 'Your wound is doing well, but the fatigue of the journey might bring on inflammation; it will be good for you, in the course of to-morrow, to take a soothing potion, that I will make ready this evening, to have with us in the carriage.' The doctor's plan was a simple one," added

Faringhea; "to-day the prince was to take the potion at four or five o'clock in the afternoon—and fall into a deep sleep—the doctor to grow uneasy, and stop the carriage—to declare that it would be dangerous to continue the journey—to pass the night at an inn, and keep close watch over the prince, whose stupor was only to cease when it suited your purposes. That was your design—it was cleverly planned—I chose to make use of it for myself, and I have succeeded."

"All that you are talking about, my dear sir," said Rodin, biting his nails, "is pure Hebrew to me."

"No doubt, because of my accent. But tell me, have you heard speak of array-mow?"

"No."

"Your loss! It is an admirable production of the Island of Java, so fertile in poisons."

"What is that to me?" said Rodin, in a sharp voice, but hardly able to dissemble his growing anxiety.

"It concerns you nearly. We sons of Bowanee have a horror of shedding blood," resumed Faringhea; "to pass the cord round the neck of our victims, we wait till they are asleep. When their sleep is not deep enough, we know how to make it deeper. We are skilful at our work; the serpent is not more cunning, or the lion more valiant. Djalma himself bears our mark. The array-mow is an impalpable powder, and, by letting the sleeper inhale a few grains of it, or by mixing it with the tobacco to be smoked by a waking man, we can throw our victim into a stupor, from which nothing will rouse him. If we fear to administer too strong a dose at once, we let the sleeper inhale a little at different times, and we can thus prolong the trance at pleasure, and without any danger, as long as a man does not require meat and drink—say, thirty or forty hours. You see, that opium is mere trash compared to this divine narcotic. I had brought some of this with me from Java—as a mere curiosity, you know—without forgetting the counter poison."

"Oh! there is a counter-poison, then?" said Rodin, mechanically.

"Just as there are people quite contrary to what we are, brother of the good work. The Javanese call the juice of this root tooboe; it dissipates the stupor caused by the array-mow, as the sun disperses the clouds. Now, yesterday evening, being certain of the projects of your emissary against Djalma, I waited till the doctor was in bed and

asleep. I crept into his room, and made him inhale such a dose of array-mow—that he is probably sleeping still."

"Miscreant!" cried Rodin, more and more alarmed by this narrative, for Faringhea had dealt a terrible blow at the machinations of the socius and his friends. "You risk poisoning the doctor."

"Yes, brother; just as he ran the risk of poisoning Djalma. This morning we set out, leaving your doctor at the inn, plunged in a deep sleep. I was alone in the carriage with Djalma. He smoked like a true Indian; some grains of array-mow, mixed with the tobacco in his long pipe, first made him drowsy; a second dose, that he inhaled, sent him to sleep; and so I left him at the inn where we stopped. Now, brother, it depends upon me, to leave Djalma in his trance, which will last till to-morrow evening or to rouse him from it on the instant. Exactly as you comply with my demands or not, Djalma will or will not be in the Rue Saint-François to-morrow."

So saying, Faringhea drew from his pocket the medal belonging to Djalma, and observed, as he showed it to Rodin: "You see that I tell you the truth. During Djalma's sleep, I took from him this medal, the only indication he has of the place where he ought to be to-morrow. I finish, then, as I began: Brother, I have come to ask you for a great deal."

For some minutes, Rodin had been biting his nails to the quick, as was his custom when seized with a fit of dumb and concentrated rage. Just then, the bell of the porter's lodge rang three times in a particular manner. Rodin did not appear to notice it, and yet a sudden light sparkled in his small reptile eyes; while Faringhea, with his arms folded, looked at him with an expression of triumph and disdainful superiority. The socius bent down his head, remained silent for some seconds, took mechanically a pen from his desk, and began to gnaw the feather, as if in deep reflection upon what Faringhea had just said. Then, throwing down the pen upon the desk, he turned suddenly towards the half-caste, and addressed him with an air of profound contempt: "Now, really, M. Faringhea—do you think to make game of us with your cock-and-bull stories?"

Amazed, in spite of his audacity, the half-caste recoiled a step.

"What, sir!" resumed Rodin. "You come here into a respectable house, to boast that you have stolen letters, strangled this man, drugged that other? Why, sir, it is downright madness. I wished to hear you to the end, to

see to what extent you would carry your audacity—for none but a monstrous rascal would venture to plume himself on such infamous crimes. But I prefer believing, that they exist only in your imagination."

As he barked out these words, with a degree of animation not usual in him, Rodin rose from his seat, and approached the chimney, while Faringhea, who had not yet recovered from his surprise, looked at him in silence. In a few seconds, however, the half-caste returned, with a gloomy and savage mien: "Take care, brother; do not force me to prove to you that I have told the truth."

"Come, come, sir; you must be fresh from the Antipodes, to believe us Frenchmen such easy dupes. You have, you say, the prudence of a serpent, and the courage of a lion. I do not know if you are a courageous lion, but you are certainly not a prudent serpent. What! you have about you a letter from M. Van Dael, by which I might be compromised—supposing all this not to be a fable—you have left Prince Djalma in a stupor, which would serve my projects, and from which you alone can rouse him—you are able, you say, to strike a terrible blow at my interests—and yet you do not consider (bold lion! crafty serpent as you are!) that I only want to gain twenty-four hours upon you. Now, you come from the ends of India to Paris, an unknown stranger—you believe me to be as great a scoundrel as yourself, since you call me brother—and do not once consider, that you are here in my power—that this street and house are solitary, and that I could have three or four persons to bind you in a second, savage Strangler though you are!—and that just by pulling this bell-rope," said Rodin, as he took it in his hand. "Do not be alarmed," added he, with a diabolical smile, as he saw Faringhea make an abrupt movement of surprise and fright; "would I give you notice, if I meant to act in this manner?—But just answer me. Once bound and put in confinement for twenty-four hours, how could you injure me? Would it not be easy for me to possess myself of Van Dael's letter, and Djalma's medal? and the latter, plunged in a stupor till to-morrow evening, need not trouble me at all. You see, therefore, that your threats are vain—because they rest upon falsehood—because it is not true, that Prince Djalma is here and in your power. Begone, sir—leave the house; and when next you wish to make dupes, show more judgment in the selection."

Faringhea seemed struck with astonishment. All that he had just heard seemed very probable. Rodin might seize

upon him, the letter, and the medal, and, by keeping him prisoner, prevent Djalma from being awakened. And yet Rodin ordered him to leave the house, at the moment when Faringhea had imagined himself so formidable. As he thought for the motives of this inexplicable conduct, it struck him that Rodin, notwithstanding the proofs he had brought him, did not yet believe that Djalma was in his power. On that theory, the contempt of Van Dael's correspondent admitted of a natural explanation. But Rodin was playing a bold and skilful game; and, while he appeared to mutter to himself, as in anger, he was observing, with intense anxiety, the Strangler's countenance.

The latter, almost certain that he had divined the secret motive of Rodin, replied: "I am going—but one word more. You think I deceive you?"

"I am certain of it. You have told me nothing but a tissue of fables, and I have lost much time in listening to them. Spare me the rest; it is late—and I should like to be alone."

"One minute more: you are a man, I see, from whom nothing should be hid," said Faringhea, "from Djalma, I could now only expect alms and disdain—for, with a character like this, to say to him, 'Pay me, because I might have betrayed you and did not,' would be to provoke his anger and contempt. I could have killed him twenty times over, but his day is not yet come," said the Thug, with a gloomy air; "and to wait for that and other fatal days, I must have gold, much gold. You alone can pay me for the betrayal of Djalma, for you alone profit by it. You refuse to hear me, because you think I am deceiving you. But I took the direction of the inn where we stopped—and here it is. Send some one to ascertain the truth of what I tell you, and then you will believe me. But the price of my services will be high; for I told you that I wanted much."

So saying, Faringhea offered a printed card to Rodin; the socius, who, out of the corner of his eye, followed all the half-caste's movements, appeared to be absorbed in thought, and taking no heed of anything.

"Here is the address," repeated Faringhea, as he held out the card to Rodin; "assure yourself that I do not lie."

"Eh? what is it?" said the other, casting a rapid but stolen glance at the address, which he read greedily, without touching the card.

"Take this address," repeated the half-caste, "and you may then assure yourself——"

"Really, sir," cried Rodin, pushing back the card with his hand, "your impudence confounds me. I repeat that I wish to have nothing in common with you. For the last time, I tell you to leave the house. I know nothing about your Prince Djalma. You say you can injure me—do so—make no ceremonies—but, in heaven's name, leave me to myself."

So saying, Rodin rang the bell violently. Faringhea made a movement as if to stand upon the defensive; but only the old servant, with his quiet and placid mien, appeared at the door.

"Lapierre, light the gentleman out," said Rodin, pointing to Faringhea.

Terrified at Rodin's calmness, the half-caste hesitated to leave the room.

"Why do you wait, sir?" said Rodin, remarking his hesitation. "I wish to be alone."

"So, sir," said Faringhea, as he withdrew, slowly, "you refuse my offers? Take care! to-morrow it will be too late."

"I have the honor to be your most humble servant, sir," said Rodin, bowing courteously. The Strangler went out, and the door closed upon him.

Immediately, Father d'Aigrigny entered from the next room. His countenance was pale and agitated.

"What have you done?" exclaimed he addressing Rodin. "I have heard all. I am unfortunately too sure that this wretch spoke the truth. The Indian is in his power, and he goes to rejoin him."

"I think not," said Rodin, humbly, as, bowing, he reassumed his dull and submissive countenance.

"What will prevent this man from rejoining the prince?"

"Allow me. As soon as the rascal was shown in, I knew him; and so, before speaking a word to him, I wrote a few lines to Morok, who was waiting below with Goliath till your reverence should be at leisure. Afterwards, in the course of the conversation, when they brought me Morok's answer, I added some fresh instructions, seeing the turn that affairs were taking."

"And what was the use of all this, since you have let the man leave the house?"

"Your reverence will perhaps deign to observe that he did not leave it, till he had given me the direction of the hotel where the Indian now is, thanks to my innocent

stratagem of appearing to despise him. But, if it had failed, Faringhea would still have fallen into the hands of Goliath and Morok, who are waiting for him in the street, a few steps from the door. Only we should have been rather embarrassed, as we should not have known where to find Prince Djalma."

"More violence!" said Father d'Aigrigny, with repugnance.

"It is to be regretted, very much regretted," replied Rodin; "but it was necessary to follow out the system already adopted."

"Is that meant for a reproach?" said Father d'Aigrigny, who began to think that Rodin was something more than a mere writing-machine.

"I could not permit myself to blame your reverence," said Rodin, bringing almost to the ground. "But all that will be required is to confine this man for twenty-four hours."

"And afterwards—his complaints?"

"Such a scoundrel as he is will not dare to complain. Besides, he left this house in freedom. Morok and Goliath will bandage his eyes when they seize him. The house has another entrance in the Rue Vieille-des-Ursins. At this hour, and in such a storm, no one will be passing through this deserted quarter of the town. The knave will be confused by the change of place; they will put him into a cellar of the new building, and to-morrow night, about the same hour, they will restore him to liberty with the like precautions. As for the East Indian, we now know where to find him: we must send to him a confidential person, and, if he recovers from his trance, there would be, in my humble opinion," said Rodin, modestly, "a very simple and quiet manner of keeping him away from the Rue Saint François all day to-morrow."

The same servant with the mild countenance, who had introduced and shown out Faringhea, here entered the room, after knocking discreetly at the door. He held in his hand a sort of game-bag, which he gave to Rodin, saying: "Here is what M. Morok has just brought; he came in by the Rue Vieille."

The servant withdrew, and Rodin, opening the bag, said to Father d'Aigrigny, as he showed him the contents: "The medal, and Van Dael's letter. Morok has been quick at his work."

"One more danger avoided," said the marquis; "it is a pity to be forced to such measures."

"We must only blame the rascal who has obliged us to have recourse to them. I will send instantly to the hotel where the Indian lodges."

"And, at seven in the morning, you will conduct Gabriel to the Rue Saint François. It is there that I must have with him the interview which he has so earnestly demanded these three days."

"I informed him of it this evening, and he awaits your orders."

"At last, then," said Father d'Aigrigny, "after so many struggles, and fears, and crosses, only a few hours' separate us from the moment which we have so long desired."

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We now conduct the reader to the house in the Rue Saint-François.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOUSE IN THE RUE SAINT-FRANCOIS.

On entering the Rue Saint-Gervais, by the Rue Doré (in the Marais), you would have found yourself, at the epoch of this narrative, directly opposite to an enormously high wall, the stones of which were black and worm-eaten with age. This wall, which extended nearly the whole length of that solitary street, served to support a terrace shaded by trees of some hundred years old, which thus grew about forty feet above the causeway. Through their thick branches appeared the stone front, peaked roof and tall brick chimneys of an antique house, the entrance of which was situated in the Rue Saint-François, not far from the Rue Saint-Gervais corner. Nothing could be more gloomy than the exterior of this abode. On the entrance-side also was a very high wall, pierced with two or three loop-holes, strongly grated. A carriage gateway in massive oak, barred with iron, and studded with large nail-heads, whose primitive color disappeared beneath a thick layer of mud, dust, and rust, fitted close into the arch of a deep recess, forming the swell of a bay window above. In one of these massive gates was a smaller door, which served for ingress and egress to Samuel the Jew, the guardian of this dreary abode. On passing the threshold, you came to a passage, formed in the building which faced in the street. In this

building was the lodging of Samuel, with its windows opening upon the rather spacious inner court-yard, through the railing of which you perceived the garden. In the middle of this garden stood a two-storied stone house, so strangely built, that you had to mount a flight of steps, or rather a double flight of at least twenty steps, to reach the door, which had been walled up a hundred and fifty years before. The window-blinds of this habitation had been replaced by large thick plates of lead, hermetically soldered, and kept in by frames of iron clamped in the stone. Moreover, completely to intercept air and light, and thus to guard against decay within and without, the roof had been covered with thick sheets of lead, as well as the vents of the tall chimneys, which had previously been bricked up. The same precautions had been taken with respect to a small square belvidere, situated on the top of the house; this glass cage was covered with a sort of dome, soldered to the roof. Only, in consequence of some singular fancy, in every one of the leaden plates, which concealed the four sides of the belvidere, corresponding to the cardinal points, seven little round holes had been bored in the form of a cross, and were easily distinguishable from the outside. Everywhere else the plates of lead were completely unpierced. Thanks to these precautions, and to the substantial structure of the building, nothing but a few outward repairs had been necessary; and the apartments, entirely removed from the influence of the external air, no doubt remained, during a century and a half, exactly in the same state as at the time of their being shut up. The aspect of walls in crevices, of broken, worm-eaten shutters, of a roof half fallen in, and windows covered with wall-flowers, would perhaps have been less sad than the appearance of this stone house, plated with iron and lead, and preserved like a mausoleum. The garden, completely deserted, and only regularly visited once a week by Samuel, presented to the view, particularly in summer, an incredible confusion of parasites and brambles. The trees, left to themselves, had shot forth and mingled their branches in all directions; some straggling vines, reproduced from offshoots, had crept along the ground to the foot of the trees, and, climbing up their trunks, had twined themselves about them, and encircled their highest branches with their inextricable net. You could only pass through this virgin forest by following the path made by the guardian, to go from the grating to the house, the approaches to which were a little sloped to let the

water run off, and carefully paved to the width of about ten feet. Another narrow path, which extended all around the enclosure, was every night perambulated by two or three Pyrenees dogs—a faithful race, which had been perpetuated in the house during a century and a half. Such was the habitation destined for the meeting of the descendants of the family of Rennepont. The night which separated the 12th from the 13th day of February was near its close. A calm had succeeded the storm, and the rain had ceased; the sky was clear and full of stars; the moon, on its decline, shone with a mild lustre, and threw a melancholy light over that deserted, silent house, whose threshold for so many years no human footstep had crossed.

A bright gleam of light, issuing from one of the windows of the guardian's dwelling, announced that Samuel was awake. Figure to yourself a tolerably large room, lined from top to bottom with old walnut wainscoting, browned to an almost black, with age. Two half-extinguished brands are smoking amid the cinders on the hearth. On the stone mantelpiece, painted to resemble gray granite, stands an old iron candlestick, furnished with a meagre candle, capped by an extinguisher. Near it one sees a pair of double-barrelled pistols, and a sharp cutlass, with a hilt of carved bronze, belonging to the seventeenth century. Moreover, a heavy rifle rests against one of the chimney jambs. Four stools, an old oak press, and a square table with twisted legs, formed the sole furniture of this apartment. Against the wall were systematically suspended a number of keys of different sizes, the shape of which bore evidence to their antiquity, whilst to their rings were affixed divers labels. The back of the old press, which moved by a secret spring, had been pushed aside, and discovered, built in the wall, a large and deep iron chest, the lid of which, being open, displayed the wondrous mechanism of one of those Florentine locks of the sixteenth century, which, better than any modern invention, set all picklocks at defiance; and, moreover, according to the notions of that age, are supplied with a thick lining of asbestos cloth, suspended by gold wire at a distance from the sides of the chest, for the purpose of rendering incombustible the articles contained in it. A large cedar-wood box had been taken from the chest, and placed upon a stool; it contained numerous papers, carefully arranged and docketed. By the light of a brass lamp, the old keeper Samuel, was writing in a small register, whilst Bathsheba, his wife, was dictating to him from an account. Samuel was about

eighty-two years old, and, notwithstanding his advanced age, a mass of gray curling hair covered his head. He was short, thin, nervous, and the involuntary petulance of his movements proved that years had not weakened his energy and activity; though, out of doors, where, however, he made his appearance very seldom, he affected a sort of second childhood, as had been remarked by Rodin to Father d'Aigrigny. An old dressing-gown, of maroon-colored camlet, with large sleeves, completely enveloped the old man, and reached to his feet.

Samuel's features were cast in the pure, Eastern mould of his race. His complexion was of a dead yellow, his nose aquiline, his chin shaded by a little tuft of white beard, while projecting cheek-bones threw a harsh shadow upon the hollow and wrinkled cheeks. His countenance was full of intelligence, fine sharpness, and sagacity. On his broad, high forehead one might read frankness, honesty, and firmness; his eyes, black and brilliant as an Arab's, were at once mild and piercing.

His wife, Bathsheba, some fifteen years younger than himself, was of tall stature, and dressed entirely in black. A low cap, of starched lawn, which reminded one of the grave head-dresses of Dutch matrons, encircled a pale and austere countenance, formerly of a rare and haughty beauty, and impressed with the Scriptural character. Some lines in the forehead, caused by the almost continual knitting of her gray brows, showed that this woman had often suffered from the pressure of intense grief.

At this very moment her countenance betrayed inexpressible sorrow. Her look was fixed, her head resting on her bosom. She had let her right hand, which held a small account-book, fall upon her lap, while the other hand grasped convulsively a long tress of jet-black hair, which she bore about her neck. It was fastened by a golden clasp, about an inch square, in which, under a plate of crystal, that shut in one side of it like a relic-case, could be seen a piece of linen, folded square, and almost entirely covered with dark red spots that resembled blood a long time dried.

After a short silence, during which Samuel was occupied with his register, he read aloud what he had just been writing: "Per contra, 5,000 Austrian Metallics of 1,000 florins, under date of October 19th, 1826."

After which enumeration, Samuel raised his head, and said to his wife: "Well, is it right, Bathsheba? Have you compared it with the account-book?"

Bathsheba did not answer. Samuel looked at her, and, seeing that she was absorbed in grief, said to her, with an expression of tender anxiety: "What is the matter? Good heaven! what is the matter with you?"

"The 19th of October, 1826," said she, slowly, with her eyes still fixed, and pressing yet more closely the lock of black hair which she wore about her neck; "It was a fatal day—for, Samuel, it was the date of the last letter which we received from——"

Bathsheba was unable to proceed. She uttered a long sigh, and concealed her face in her hands.

"Oh! I understand you," observed the old man, in a tremulous voice; "a father may be taken up by the thought of other cares; but the heart of a mother is ever wakeful." Throwing his pen down upon the table, Samuel leaned his forehead upon his hands in sorrow.

Bathsheba resumed, as if she found a melancholy pleasure in these cruel remembrances: "Yes; that was the last day on which our son, Abel, wrote to us from Germany, to announce to us that he had invested the funds according to your desire, and was going thence into Poland, to effect another operation."

"And in Poland he met the death of a martyr," added Samuel. "With no motive and no proof, they accused him falsely of coming to organize smuggling, and the Russian governor, treating him as they treat our brothers in that land of cruel tyranny, condemned him to the dreadful punishment of the knout, without even hearing him in his defence. Why should they hear a Jew? What is a Jew? A creature below a serf, whom they reproach for all the vices that a degrading slavery has engendered. A Jew beaten to death? Who would trouble themselves about it?"

"And poor Abel, so good, so faithful, died beneath their stripes, partly from shame, partly from the wounds," said Bathsheba, shuddering. "One of our Polish brethren obtained with great difficulty permission to bury him. He cut off this lock of beautiful black hair—which, with this scrap of linen, bathed in the blood of our dear son, is all that now remains to us of him." Bathsheba covered the hair and clasp with convulsive kisses.

"Alas!" said Samuel, drying his tears, which had burst forth at these sad recollections, "the Lord did not at last remove our child, until the task which our family has accomplished faithfully for a century and a half was nearly at an end. Of what use will our race be henceforth upon earth?" added Samuel, most bitterly. "Our duty is per-

formed. This casket contains a royal fortune—and yonder house, walled up for a hundred and fifty years, will be opened to-morrow to the descendants of my ancestor's benefactor." So saying, Samuel turned his face sorrowfully towards the house, which he could see through the window. The dawn was just about to appear. The moon had set; belvidere, roof, and chimneys formed a black mass upon the dark blue of the starry firmament.

Suddenly, Samuel grew pale, and, rising abruptly, said to his wife in a tremulous tone, whilst he still pointed to the house: "Bathsheba! the seven points of light—just as it was thirty years ago. Look! look!"

Indeed, the seven round holes, bored in the form of a cross in the leaden plates which covered the window of the belvidere, sparkled like so many luminous points, as if some one in the house ascended with a light to the roof.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEBIT AND CREDIT.

For some seconds, Samuel and Bathsheba remained motionless, with their eyes fixed in fear and uneasiness on the seven luminous points, which shone through the darkness of the night from the summit of the belvidere; while, on the horizon, behind the house, a pale, rosy hue announced the dawn of day.

Samuel was the first to break silence, and he said to his wife, as he drew his hand across his brow: "The grief caused by the remembrance of our poor child has prevented us from reflecting that, after all, there should be nothing to alarm us in what we see."

"How so, Samuel?"

"My father always told me that he, and my grandfather before him, had seen such lights at long intervals."

"Yes, Samuel—but without being able, any more than ourselves, to explain the cause."

"Like my father and grandfather, we can only suppose that some secret passage gives admittance to persons who, like us, have some mysterious duty to fulfil in this dwelling. Besides, my father warned me not to be uneasy at these appearances, foretold by him, and now visible for the second time in thirty years."

"No matter for that, Samuel, it does strike one as if it was something supernatural."

"The days of miracles are over," said the Jew, shaking

his head sorrowfully: "many of the old houses in this quarter have subterraneous communications with distant places—some extending even to the Seine and the Catacombs. Doubtless, this house is so situated, and the persons who make these rare visits enter by some such means."

"But that the belvidere should be thus lighted up?"

"According to the plan of the building, you know that the belvidere forms a kind of skylight to the apartment called the Great Hall of Mourning, situated on the upper story. As it is completely dark, in consequence of the closing of all the windows, they must use a light to visit this Hall of Mourning—a room which is said to contain some very strange and gloomy things," added the Jew, with a shudder.

Bathsheba, as well as her husband, gazed attentively on the seven luminous points, which diminished in brightness as the daylight gradually increased.

"As you say, Samuel, the mystery may be thus explained," resumed the Hebrew's wife. "Besides, the day is so important a one for the family of Rennepont, that this apparition ought not to astonish as under the circumstances."

"Only to think," remarked Samuel, "that these lights have appeared at several different times throughout a century and a half! There must, therefore, be another family that, like ours, has devoted itself, from generation to generation, to accomplish a pious duty."

"But what is this duty? It will perhaps be explained to-day."

"Come, come, Bathsheba," suddenly exclaimed Samuel, as if roused from his reverie, and reproaching himself with idleness; this is the day, and, before eight o'clock, our cash account must be in order, and these titles to immense property arranged, so that they may be delivered to the rightful owners"—and he pointed to the cedar-wood box.

"You are right, Samuel; this day does not belong to us. It is a solemn day—one that would have been sweet, oh! very sweet to you and me—if now any days could be sweet to us," said Bathsheba bitterly, for she was thinking of her son.

"Bathsheba," said Samuel, mournfully, as he laid his hand on his wife's; "we shall at least have the stern satisfaction of having done our duty. And has not the Lord been very favorable to us, though He has thus severely tried us by the death of our son? Is it not thanks to His providence that three generations of my family have been able to commence, continue, and finish this great work?"

"Yes, Samuel," said the Jewess, affectionately, "and for you at least this satisfaction will be combined with calm and

quietness, for on the stroke of noon you will be delivered from a very terrible responsibility."

So saying, Bathsheba pointed to the box.

"It is true," replied the old man; "I had rather these immense riches were in the hands of those to whom they belong, than in mine; but, to-day, I shall cease to be their trustee. Once more then, I will check the account for the last time, and compare the register with the cash-book that you hold in your hand."

Bathsheba bowed her head affirmatively, and Samuel, taking up his pen, occupied himself once more with his calculations. His wife, in spite of herself, again yielded to the sad thoughts which that fatal date had awakened, by reminding her of the death of her son.

Let us now trace rapidly the history, in appearance so romantic and marvellous, in reality so simple, of the fifty thousand crowns, which, thanks to the law of accumulation, and to a prudent, intelligent and faithful investment, had naturally, and necessarily, been transformed, in the space of a century and a half, into a sum far more important than the forty millions estimated by Father d'Aigrigny—who, partially informed on this subject, and reckoning the disastrous accidents, losses, and bankruptcies which might have occurred during so long a period, believed that forty millions might well be considered enormous.

The history of this fortune being closely connected with that of the Samuel family, by whom it had been managed for three generations, we shall give it again in a few words.

About the period 1670, some years before his death, Marius de Rennepont, then travelling in Portugal, had been enabled, by means of powerful interest, to save the life of an unfortunate Jew, condemned to be burnt alive by the Inquisition, because of his religion. This Jew was Isaac Samuel, grandfather of the present guardian of the house in the Rue Saint-François.

Generous men often attach themselves to those they have served, as much, at least, as the obliged parties are attached to their benefactors. Having ascertained that Isaac, who at that time carried on a petty broker's business at Lisbon, was industrious, honest, active, laborious, and intelligent, M. de Rennepont, who then possessed large property in France, proposed to the Jew to accompany him, and undertake the management of his affairs. The same hatred and suspicion with which the Israelites have always been followed, was then at its height. Isaac was therefore doubly grateful for this mark of confidence on the part of M. de Rennepont. He accepted the offer, and promised from that

day to devote his existence to the service of him who had first saved his life, and then trusted implicitly to his good faith and uprightness, although he was a Jew, and belonged to a race generally suspected and despised. M. de Rennepont, a man of great soul, endowed with a good spirit, was not deceived in his choice. Until he was deprived of his fortune, it prospered wonderfully in the hands of Isaac Samuel, who, gifted with an admirable aptitude for business, applied himself exclusively to advance the interests of his benefactor.

Then came the persecution and ruin of M. de Rennepont, whose property was confiscated and given up to the reverend fathers of the Company of Jesus only a few days before his death. Concealed in the retreat he had chosen, therein to put a violent end to his life, he sent secretly for Isaac Samuel, and delivered to him fifty thousand crowns in gold, the last remains of his fortune. This faithful servant was to invest the money to the best advantage, and, if he should have a son, transmit to him the same obligation; or, should he have no child, he was to seek out some relation worthy of continuing this trust, to which would moreover be annexed a fair reward. It was thus to be transmitted and perpetuated from relative to relative, until the expiration of a century and a half. M. de Rennepont also begged Isaac to take charge, during his life, of the house in the Rue Saint-François, where he would be lodged gratis, and to leave this function likewise to his descendants, if it were possible.

If even Isaac Samuel had not had children, the powerful bond of union which exists between certain Jewish families, would have rendered practicable the last will of De Rennepont. The relations of Isaac would have become partners in his gratitude to his benefactor, and they, and their succeeding generations, would have religiously accomplished the task imposed upon one of their race. But, several years after the death of De Rennepont, Isaac had a son.

This son, Levy Samuel, born in 1689, not having had any children by his first wife, married again at nearly sixty years of age, and, in 1750, he also had a son—David Samuel, the guardian of the house in the Rue Saint-François, who, in 1832 (the date of this narrative), was eighty-two years old, and seemed likely to live as long as his father, who had died at the age of ninety-three. Finally, Abel Samuel, the son whom Bathsheba so bitterly regretted, born in 1790, had perished under the Russian knout, at the age of thirty-six.

Having established this humble genealogy, we easily understand how this successive longevity of three members

of the Samuel family, all of whom had been guardians of the walled house, by uniting, as it were, the nineteenth with the seventeenth century, simplified and facilitated the execution of M. de Rennepont's will; the latter having declared his desire to the grandfather of the Samuels, that the capital should only be augmented by interest at five per cent.—so that the fortune might come to his descendants free from all taint of usurious speculation.

The fellow men of the Samuel family, the first inventors of the bill of exchange, which served them in the Middle Ages to transport mysteriously considerable amounts from one end of the world to the other, to conceal their fortune, and to shield it from the rapacity of their enemies—the Jews, we say, having almost the monopoly of the trade in money and exchanges, until the end of the eighteenth century, aided the secret transactions and financial operations of this family, which, up to about 1820, placed their different securities, which had become progressively immense, in the hands of the principal Israelitish bankers and merchants of Europe. This sure and secret manner of acting had enabled the present guardian of the house in the Rue Saint-François, to effect enormous investments, unknown to all; and it was more especially during the period of his management, that the capital sum had acquired, by the mere fact of compound interest, an almost incalculable development. Compared with him, his father and grandfather had only small amounts to manage. Though it had only been necessary to find successively sure and immediate investments, so that the money might not remain as it were one day without bearing interest, it had acquired financial capacity to attain this result, when so many millions were in question. The last of the Samuels, brought up in the school of his father, had exhibited this capacity in a very high degree, as will be seen immediately by the results. Nothing could be more touching, noble, and respectable, than the conduct of the members of this Jewish family, who, partners in the engagement of gratitude taken by their ancestor, devote themselves for long years, with as much disinterestedness as intelligence and honesty, to the slow acquisition of a kingly fortune, of which they expect no part themselves, but which, thanks to them, would come pure, as immense, to the hands of the descendants of their benefactor! Nor could anything be more honorable to him who made, and him who received this deposit, than the simple promise by word of mouth, unaccompanied by any security save mutual

confidence and reciprocal esteem, when the result was only to be produced at the end of a century and a half!

* * * * * * *

After once more reading his inventory with attention, Samuel said to his wife: "I am certain of the correctness of my additions. Now please to compare with the account-book in your hand the summary of the investments that I have just entered in the register. I will assure myself, at the same time, that the bonds and vouchers are properly arranged in this casket, that, on the opening of the will, they may be delivered in order to the notary.

"Begin, my dear, and I will check you," said Bathsheba.

Samuel read as follows, examining as he went on, the contents of his casket:—

Statement of the account of the heirs of M. DE RENNEPONT, *delivered by* DAVID SAMUELS.

DEBIT.		CREDIT.	
2,000,000 francs per annum, in the French 5 P. C., bought from 1825 to 1832, at an average price of 99f. 50c.	39,800,000	150,000 francs received from M. de Rennepont, in 1682, by Isaac Samuel, my grandfath'r; and invested by him, my father, and myself, in different securities, at Five per Cent. Interest, with a settlement of account and Investment of interest every six months, producing, as by annexed vouchers,	225,950,000
900,000 francs, ditto, in the French 3 P. C., bought during the same years, at an average of 74f. 25c. .	22,275,000		
5,000 shares in the Bank of France, bought at 1,900	9,500,000		
3,000 shares in the Four Canals, in a certificate from the Company, bought at 1,115f.	3,345,000		
125,000 ducats of Neapolitans, at an average of 82. 2,050,000 ducats, at 4f. 400.	9,020,000		
5,000 Austrian Metallics, of 1,000 florins, at 93—say 4,650,000 florins, at 2f. 50c.	11,625,000	Less losses sustained by failures, expenses of commission and brokerage, and salary of three generations of trustees, as per statement annexed . .	13,775,000
75,000 pounds sterling per annum, English Consolidated 3 P. C., at 88¾—say £2,218,750, at 25f. . .	55,468,750		
1,200,000 florins, Dutch 2½ P. C., at 60—28,860,000 florins, at 2f. 100. . .	60,606,000		
Cash in bank notes, gold and silver	535,250		
	Francs 212,175,000		Francs 212,175,000

Paris, 12th February, 1832.

"It is quite right," said Samuel, after examining the papers, contained in the cedar-wood box. "There remains in hand, at the absolute disposal of the heirs of the Rennepont family, the sum of TWO HUNDRED AND TWELVE MILLIONS, ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND FRANCS." And the old man looked at his wife with an expression of legitimate pride.

"It is hardly credible!" cried Bathsheba, struck with surprise. "I knew that you had immense property in your hands; but I could never have believed, that one hundred and fifty thousand francs, left a century and a half ago, should be the only source of this immense fortune."

"It is even so, Bathsheba," answered the old man, proudly. "Doubtless, my grandfather, my father, and myself, have all been exact and faithful in the management of these funds; doubtless, we have required some sagacity in the choice of investments, in times of revolution and commercial panics; but all this was easy to us, thanks to our relations with our brethren in all countries—and never have I, or any of mine, made an usurious investment, or even taken the full advantage of the legal rate of interest. Such were the positive demands of M. de Rennepont, given to my grandfather; nor is there in the world a fortune that has been obtained by purer means. Had it not been for this disinterestedness, we might have much augmented this two hundred and twelve millions, only by taking advantage of a few favorable circumstances."

"Dear me! is it possible?"

"Nothing is more simple, Bathsheba. Every one knows, that in fourteen years a capital will be doubled, by the mere accumulation of interest and compound interest at five per cent. Now reflect, that in a century and a half there are ten times fourteen years, and that these one hundred and fifty thousands francs have thus been doubled and redoubled, over and over again. All that astonishes you will then appear plain enough. In 1682, M. de Rennepont entrusted my grandfather with a hundred and fifty thousand francs; this sum, invested as I have told you, would have produced in 1696, fourteen years after, three hundred thousand francs. These last, doubled in 1710, would produce six hundred thousand. On the death of my grandfather in 1719, the amount was already near a million; in 1724, it would be twelve hundred thousand francs; in 1738, two millions four hundred thousand; in 1752, about two years after my birth, four millions eight hundred thousand; in 1766, nine millions six hundred thousand; in1780, nineteen millions two hundred thousand; in 1794, twelve years after the death of my father, thirty-eight

millions four hundred thousand; in 1808, seventy-six millions eight hundred thousand; in 1822, one hundred and fifty-three millions six hundred thousand; and, at this time, taking the compound interest for ten years, it should be at least two hundred and twenty-five millions. But losses and inevitable charges, of which the account has been strictly kept, have reduced the sum to two hundred and twelve millions one hundred and seventy-five thousand francs, the securities for which are in this box."

"I now understand you, my dear," answered Bathsheba, thoughtfully; "but how wonderful is this power of accumulation! and what admirable provision may be made for the future, with the smallest present resources!"

"Such, no doubt, was the idea of M. de Rennepont; for my father has often told me, and he derived it from his father, that M. de Rennepont was one of the soundest intellects of his time," said Samuel, as he closed the cedar-box.

"God grant his descendants may be worthy of this kingly fortune, and make a noble use of it!" said Bathsheba, rising.

It was now broad day, and the clock had just struck seven.

"The masons will soon be here," said Samuel, as he replaced the cedar-box in the iron safe, concealed behind the antique press. "Like you, Bathsheba, I am curious and anxious to know, what descendants of M. de Rennepont will now present themselves."

Two or three loud knocks on the outer gate resounded through the house. The barking of the watch-dogs responded to this summons.

Samuel said to his wife: "It is no doubt the masons, whom the notary has sent with his clerk. Tie all the keys and their labels together; I will come back and fetch them."

So saying, Samuel went down to the door, with much nimbleness, considering his age, prudently opened a small wicket, and saw three workmen, in the garb of masons, accompanied by a young man dressed in black.

"What may you want, gentlemen?" said the Jew, before opening the door, as he wished first to make sure of the identity of the personages.

"I am sent by M. Dumesnil, the notary," answered the clerk, "to be present at the unwalling of a door. Here is a letter from my master, addressed to M. Samuel, guardian ot the house."

"I am he, sir," said the Jew: "please to put the letter through the slide, and I will take it."

The clerk did as Samuel desired, but shrugged his shoul-

ders at what he considered the ridiculous precautions of a suspicious old man. The housekeeper opened the box, took the letter, went to the end of the vaulted passage in order to read it, and carefully compared the signature with that of another letter which he drew from the pocket of his long coat; then, after all these precautions, he chained up his dogs, and returned to open the gate to the clerk and masons.

"What the devil, my good man!" said the clerk, as he entered; "there would not be more formalities in opening the gates of a fortress!"

The Jew bowed, but without answering.

"Are you deaf, my good fellow?" cried the clerk, close to his ears.

"No, sir," said Samuel, with a quiet smile, as he advanced several steps beyond the passage. Then pointing to the old house, he added: "That, sir, is the door which you will have to open; you will also have to remove the lead and iron from the second window to the right."

"Why not open all the windows?" asked the clerk.

"Because, sir, as guardian of this house, I have received particular orders on the subject."

"Who gave you these orders?"

"My father, sir, who received them from his father, who transmitted them from the master of this house. When I cease to have the care of it, the new proprietor will do as he pleases."

"Oh! very well," said the clerk, not a little surprised. Then, addressing himself to the masons, he added: "This is your business, my fine fellows; you are to unwall the door, and remove the iron frame-work of the second window to the right."

Whilst the masons set to work, under the inspection of the notary's clerk, a coach stopped before the outer gate, and Rodin, accompanied by Gabriel, entered the house in the Rue Saint François.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HEIR.

Samuel opened the door to Gabriel and Rodin.

The latter said to the Jew, "You, sir, are the keeper of this house?"

"Yes, sir," replied Samuel.

"This is Abbé Gabriel de Rennepont," said Rodin, as he introduced his companion, "one of the descendants of the family of the Renneponts."

"Happy to hear it, sir," said the Jew, almost involuntarily, struck with the angelic countenance of Gabriel—for nobleness and serenity of soul were visible in the glance of the young priest, and were written upon his pure, white brow, already crowned with the halo of martyrdom. Samuel looked at Gabriel with curiosity and benevolent interest; but feeling that this silent contemplation must cause some embarrassment to his guest, he said to him, "M. Abbé, the notary will not be here before ten o'clock."

Gabriel looked at him in turn, with an air of surprise, and answered, "What notary, sir?"

"Father d'Aigrigny will explain all this to you," said Rodin, hastily. Then addressing Samuel, he added, "We are a little before the time. Will you allow us to wait for the arrival of the notary?"

"Certainly," said Samuel, "if you please to walk into my house."

"I thank you, sir," answered Rodin, "and accept your offer."

"Follow me, then, gentlemen," said the old man.

A few moments after, the young priest and the socius, preceded by Samuel, entered one of the rooms occupied by the latter, on the ground-floor of the building, looking out upon the court-yard.

"The Abbé d'Aigrigny, who has been the guardian of M. Gabriel, will soon be coming to ask for us," added Rodin; "will you have the kindness, sir to show him into this room?"

"I will not fail to do so, sir," said Samuel, as he went out.

The socius and Gabriel were left alone. To the adorable gentleness which usually gave to the fine features of the missionary so touching a charm, there had succeeded in this moment a remarkable expression of sadness, resolution, and severity. Rodin not having seen Gabriel for some days, was greatly struck by the change he remarked in him. He had watched him silently all the way from the Rue des Postes to the Rue Saint François. The young priest wore, as usual, a long black cassock, which made still more visible the transparent paleness of his countenance. When the Jew had left the room, Gabriel said to Rodin, in a firm voice, "Will you at length inform me, sir, why, for some days past, I have been prevented from speaking to his reverence

Father d'Aigrigny? Why has he chosen this house to grant me an interview?"

"It is impossible for me to answer these questions," replied Rodin, coldly. "His reverence will soon arrive, and will listen to you. All I can tell you is, that the reverend father lays as much stress upon this meeting as you do. If he has chosen this house for the interview, it is because you have an interest to be here. You know it well—though you affected astonishment on hearing the guardian speak of a notary."

So saying, Rodin fixed a scrutinizing, anxious look upon Gabriel, whose countenance expressed only surprise.

"I do not understand you," said he, in reply to Rodin. "What have I to do with this house?"

"It is impossible that you should not know it," answered Rodin, still looking at him with attention.

"I have told you, sir, that I do not know it," replied the other, almost offended by the pertinacity of the socius.

"What, then, did your adopted mother come to tell you yesterday? Why did you presume to receive her without permission from Father d'Aigrigny, as I have heard this morning? Did she not speak with you of certain family papers, found upon you when she took you in?"

"No, sir," said Gabriel; "those papers were delivered at the time to my adopted mother's confessor, and they afterwards passed into Father d'Aigrigny's hands. This is the first I hear for a long time of these papers."

"So you affirm that Frances Baudoin did not come to speak to you on this subject?" resumed Rodin, obstinately, laying great emphasis on his words.

"This is the second time, sir, that you seem to doubt my affirmation," said the young priest, mildly, while he repressed a movement of impatience; "I assure you that I speak the truth."

"He knows nothing," thought Rodin; for he was too well convinced of Gabriel's sincerity to retain the least doubt after so positive a declaration. "I believe you," went on he. "The idea only occurred to me in reflecting what could be the reason of sufficient weight to induce you to transgress Father d'Aigrigny's orders with regard to the absolute retirement he had commanded, which was to exclude all communication with those without. Much more, contrary to all the rules of our house, you ventured to shut the door of your room, whereas it ought to remain half-open, that the mutual inspection enjoined us might be the more easily

practiced. I could only explain these sins against discipline, by the necessity of some very important conversation with your adopted mother."

"It was to a priest, and not to her adopted son, that Madame Baudoin wished to speak," replied Gabriel, in a tone of deep seriousness. "I closed my door because I was to hear a confession."

"And what had Frances Baudoin of such importance to confess?"

"You will know that by-and-bye, when I speak to his reverence—if it be his pleasure that you should hear me."

These words were so firmly spoken, that a long silence ensued. Let us remind the reader that Gabriel had hitherto been kept by his superiors in the most complete ignorance of the importance of the family interests which required his presence in the Rue Saint-François. The day before, Frances Baudoin, absorbed in her own grief, had forgotten to tell him that the two orphans also should be present at this meeting, and had she even thought of it, Dagobert would have prevented her mentioning this circumstance to the young priest.

Gabriel was therefore quite ignorant of the family ties which united him with the daughters of Marshal Simon, with Mdlle. de Cardoville, with M. Hardy, Prince Djalma, and Sleepinbuff. In a word, if it had then been revealed to him that he was the heir of Marius de Rennepont, he would have believed himself the only descendant of the family. During the moment's silence which succeeded his conversation with Rodin, Gabriel observed through the windows the masons at their work of unwalling the door. Having finished this first operation, they set about removing the bars of iron by which a plate of lead was fixed over the same entrance.

At this juncture, Father d'Aigrigny, conducted by Samuel, entered the room. Before Gabriel could turn round, Rodin had time to whisper to the reverend father, "He knows nothing—and we have no longer anything to fear from the Indian."

Notwithstanding his affected calmness, Father d'Aigrigny's countenance was pale and contracted, like that of a player who is about to stake all on a last, decisive game. Hitherto, all had favored the designs of the Society; but he could not think without alarm of the four hours which still remained before they should reach the fatal moment. Gabriel having turned towards him, Father d'Aigrigny offered him his hand with a smile, and said to him in an

affectionate and cordial tone, "My dear son, it has pained me a good deal to have been obliged to refuse you till now the interview that you so much desired. It has been no less distressing to me to impose on you a confinement of some days. Though I cannot give any explanation of what I may think fit to order, I will just observe to you that I have acted only for your interest."

"I am bound to believe your reverence," answered Gabriel, bowing his head.

In spite of himself, the young priest felt a vague sense of fear, for until his departure for his American mission, Father d'Aigrigny, at whose feet he had pronounced the formidable vows which bound him irrevocably to the Society of Jesus, had exercised over him that frightful species of influence which, acting only by despotism, suppression, and intimidation, breaks down all the living forces of the soul, and leaves it inert, trembling, and terrified. Impressions of early youth are indelible, and this was the first time, since his return from America, that Gabriel found himself in presence of Father d'Aigrigny; and although he did not shrink from the resolution he had taken, he regretted not to have been able, as he had hoped, to gather new strength and courage from an interview with Agricola and Dagobert. Father d'Aigrigny knew mankind too well not to have remarked the emotion of the young priest, and to have endeavored to explain its cause. This emotion appeared to him a favorable omen; he redoubled, therefore, his seductive arts, his air of tenderness and amenity, reserving to himself, if necessary, the choice of assuming another mask. He sat down, while Gabriel and Rodin remained standing in a respectful position, and said to the former: "You desire, my dear son, to have an important interview with me?"

"Yes, father," said Gabriel, involuntarily casting down his eyes before the large, glittering gray pupil of his superior.

"And I also have matters of great importance to communicate to you. Listen to me first; you can speak afterwards."

"I listen, father."

"It is about twelve years ago, my dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny, affectionately, "that the confessor of your adopted mother, addressing himself to me through M. Rodin, called my attention to yourself, by reporting the astonishing progress you had made at the school of the Brothers. I soon found, indeed, that your excellent conduct, your gentle, modest character, and your precocious intelligence, were

worthy of the most tender interest. From that moment I kept my eyes upon you, and at the end of some time, seeing that you did not fall off, it appeared to me that there was something more in you than the stuff that makes a workman. We agreed with your adopted mother, and through my intervention, you were admitted gratuitously to one of the schools of our Company. Thus one burden the less weighed upon the excellent woman who had taken charge of you, and you received from our paternal care all the benefits of a religious education. Is not this true, my dear son?"

"It is true, father," answered Gabriel, casting down his eyes.

"As you grew up, excellent and rare virtues displayed themselves in your character. Your obedience and mildness were above all exemplary. You made rapid progress in your studies. I knew not then to what career you wished to devote yourself, but I felt certain that, in every station of life, you would remain a faithful son of the Church. I was not deceived in my hopes, or rather, my dear son, you surpassed them all. Learning, by a friendly communication, that your adopted mother ardently desired to see you take orders, you acceded generously and religiously to the wish of the excellent woman to whom you owed so much. But as the Lord is always just in His recompenses, He willed that the most touching work of gratitude you could show to your adopted mother, should at the same time be divinely profitable by making you one of the militant members of our holy Church."

At these words, Gabriel could not repress a significant start, as he remembered Frances' sad confidences. But he restrained himself, whilst Rodin stood leaning with his elbow on the corner of the chimney-piece, continuing to examine him with singular and obstinate attention.

Father d'Aigrigny resumed: "I do not conceal from you, my dear son, that your resolution filled me with joy. I saw in you one of the future lights of the Church, and I was anxious to see it shine in the midst of our Company. You submitted courageously to our painful and difficult tests; you were judged worthy of belonging to us, and, after taking in my presence the irrevocable and sacred oath, which binds you for ever to our Company for the greater glory of God, you answered the appeal of our Holy Father * to willing souls, and offered yourself as a missionary, to preach to

* It is only in respect to Missions that the Jesuits acknowledge the papal supremacy.

savages the one Catholic faith. Though it was painful to us to part with our dear son, we could not refuse to accede to such pious wishes. You set out a humble missionary—you return a glorious martyr—and we are justly proud to reckon you amongst our number. This rapid sketch of the past was necessary, my dear son, to arrive at what follows, for we wish now, if it be possible, to draw still closer the bonds that unite us. Listen to me, my dear son; what I am about to say is confidential, and of the highest importance, not only for you, but the whole Company."

"Then, father," cried Gabriel hastily, interrupting the Abbé d'Aigrigny, "I cannot—I ought not to hear you."

The young priest became deadly pale; one saw, by the alteration of his features, that a violent struggle was taking place within him, but recovering his first resolution, he raised his head, and casting an assured look on Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin, who glanced at each other in mute surprise, he resumed: "I repeat to you, father, that if it concerns confidential matters of the Company, I must not hear you."

"Really, my dear son, you occasion me the greatest astonishment. What is the matter? Your countenance changes, your emotion is visible. Speak without fear; why can you not hear me?"

"I cannot tell you, father, until I also have, in my turn, rapidly sketched the past—such as I have learned to judge it of late. You will then understand, father, that I am no longer entitled to your confidence, for an abyss will doubtlessly soon separate us."

At these words, it is impossible to paint the look rapidly exchanged between Rodin and Father d'Aigrigny. The socius began to bite his nails, fixing his reptile eye angrily upon Gabriel; Father d'Aigrigny grew livid, and his brow was bathed in cold sweat. He asked himself with terror, if, at the moment of reaching the goal, the obstacle was going to come from Gabriel, in favor of whom all other obstacles had been removed. This thought filled him with despair. Yet the reverend father contained himself admirably, remained calm, and answered with affectionate unction: "It is impossible to believe, my dear son, that you and I can ever be separated by an abyss—unless by the abyss of grief, which would be caused by any serious danger to your salvation. But speak; I listen to you."

"It is true, that, twelve years ago, father," proceeded Gabriel, in a firm voice, growing more animated as he pro-

ceeded, "I entered, through your intervention, a college of the Company of Jesus. I entered it loving, truthful, confiding. How did they encourage those precious instincts of childhood? I will tell you. The day of my entrance, the Superior said to me, as he pointed out two children a little older than myself: 'These are the companions that you will prefer. You will always walk three together. The rules of the house forbid all intercourse between two persons only. They also require, that you should listen attentively to what your companions say, so that you may report it to me; for these dear children may have, without knowing it, bad thoughts or evil projects. Now, if you love your comrades, you must inform me of these evil tendencies, that my paternal remonstrances may save them from punishment; it is better to prevent evil than to punish it'——"

"Such are, indeed, my dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny, "the rules of our house, and the language we hold to all our pupils on their entrance."

"I know it, father," answered Gabriel, bitterly; "three days after, a poor, submissive, and credulous child, I was already a spy upon my comrades, hearing and remembering their conversation, and reporting it to the superior, who congratulated me on my zeal. What they thus made me do was shameful, and yet, God knows! I thought I was accomplishing a charitable duty. I was happy in obeying the commands of a superior whom I respected, and to whose words I listened, in my childish faith, as I should have listened to those of Heaven. One day, that I had broken some rule of the house, the superior said to me: 'My child, you have deserved a severe punishment; but you will be pardoned, if you succeed in surprising one of your comrades in the same fault that you have committed.' And for fear that, notwithstanding my faith and blind obedience, this encouragement to turn informer, from the motive of personal interest, might appear odious to me, the superior added. 'I speak to you, my child, for the sake of your comrade's salvation. Were he to escape punishment, his evil habits would become habitual. But by detecting him in a fault, and exposing him to salutary correction, you will have the double advantage of aiding in his salvation, and escaping yourself a merited punishment, which will have been remitted because of your zeal for your neighbor'——"

"Doubtless," answered Father d'Aigrigny, more and more terrified by Gabriel's language; "and in truth, my dear son, all this is conformable to the rule followed in our colleges,

and to the habits of the members of our Company, 'who may denounce each other without prejudice to mutual love and charity, and only for their greater spiritual advancement, particularly when questioned by their superior, or commanded for the greater glory of God,' as our Constitution has it."

"I know it," cried Gabriel; "I know it. 'Tis in the name of all that is most sacred amongst men, that we are encouraged to do evil."

"My dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny, trying to conceal his secret and growing terror beneath an appearance of wounded dignity, "from you to me these words are at least strange."

At this, Rodin quitted the mantelpiece, on which he had been leaning, began to walk up and down the room, with a meditative air, and without ceasing to bite his nails.

"It is cruel to be obliged to remind you, my dear son, that you are indebted to us for the education you have received," added Father d'Aigrigny.

"Such were its fruits, father," replied Gabriel. "Until then I had been a spy on the other children, from a sort of disinterestedness; but the orders of the superior made me advance another step on that shameful road. I had become an informer, to escape a merited punishment. And yet, such was my faith, my humility, my confidence, that I performed with innocence and candor this doubly odious part. Once, indeed, tormented by vague scruples, the last remains of generous aspirations that they were stifling within me, I asked myself if the charitable and religious end could justify the means, and I communicated my doubts to the superior. He replied, that I had not to judge, but to obey, and that to him alone belonged the responsibility of my acts."

"Go on, my dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny, yielding, in spite of himself, to the deepest dejection. "Alas! I was right in opposing your travel to America."

"And yet it was the will of Providence, in that new, productive, and free country, that, enlightened by a singular chance, on past and present, my eyes were at length opened. Yes!" cried Gabriel, "it was in America that, released from the gloomy abode where I had spent so many years of my youth, and finding myself for the first time face to face with the divine majesty of Nature, in the heart of immense solitudes through which I journeyed—it was there that, overcome by so much magnificence and grandeur, I made a

vow——" Here Gabriel interrupted himself, to continue: "Presently, father, I will explain to you that vow; but believe me," added the missionary, with an accent of deep sorrow, "it was a fatal day to me when I first learned to fear and condemn all that I had hitherto most revered and blessed. Oh! I assure you, father," added Gabriel, with moist eyes, "it was not for myself alone, that I then wept."

"I know the goodness of your heart, my dear son," replied Father d'Aigrigny, catching a glimpse of hope, on seeing Gabriel's emotion; "I fear that you have been led astray. But trust yourself to us, as to your spiritual fathers, and I doubt not we shall confirm your faith, so unfortunately shaken, and disperse the darkness which at present obscures your sight. Alas, my dear son, in your vain illusions, you have mistaken some false glimmer for the pure light of day. But go on."

Whilst Father d'Aigrigny was thus speaking, Rodin stopped, took a pocket-book from his coat, and wrote down several notes. Gabriel was becoming more and more pale and agitated. It required no small courage in him, to speak as he was speaking, for, since his journey to America, he had learned to estimate the formidable power of the Company. But this revelation of the past, looked at from the vantage-ground of a more enlightened present, was for the young priest the excuse, or rather the cause of the determination he had just signified to his superior, and he wished to explain all faithfully, notwithstanding the danger he knowingly encountered. He continued therefore, in an agitated voice: "You know, father, that the last days of my childhood, that happy age of frankness and innocent joy, were spent in an atmosphere of terror, suspicion, and restraint. Alas! how could I resign myself to the least impulse of confiding trust, when I was recommended to shun the looks of him who spoke with me, in order to hide the impression that his words might cause—to conceal whatever I felt, and to observe and listen to everything? Thus I reached the age of fifteen; by degrees, the rare visits that I was allowed to pay, but always in presence of one of our fathers, to my adopted mother and brother, were quite suppressed, so as to shut my heart against all soft and tender emotions. Sad and fearful in that large, old, noiseless, gloomy house, I felt that I became more and more isolated from the affections and the freedom of the world. My time was divided between mutilated studies, without connection and without object, and long hours of minute devotional exercises. I ask you, father, did

they ever seek to warm our young souls by words of tenderness or evangelic love? Alas, no! For the words of the divine Saviour—Love ye one another, they had substituted the command: Suspect ye one another. Did they ever, father, speak to us of our country or of liberty?—No! ah, no! for those words make the heart beat high; and with them, the heart must not beat at all. To our long hours of study and devotion, there only succeeded a few walks, three by three—never two and two—because by threes, the spy-system is more practicable, and because intimacies are more easily formed by two alone; and thus might have arisen some of those generous friendships, which also make the heart beat more than it should.* And so, by the habitual repression of every feeling, there came a time when I could not feel at all. For six months, I had not seen my adopted mother and brother; they came to visit me at the college; a few years before, I should have received them with transports and tears; this time my eyes were dry, my heart was cold. My mother and brother quitted me weeping. The sight of this grief struck me, and I became conscious of the icy insensibility which had been creeping upon me since I inhabited this tomb. Frightened at myself, I wished to leave it, while I had still strength to do so. Then, father, I spoke to you of the choice of a profession; for sometimes, in waking moments, I seemed to catch from afar the sound of an active and useful life, laborious and free, surrounded by family affections. Oh! then I felt the want of movement and liberty, of noble and warm emotions—of that life of the soul, which fled before me. I told it you, father, on my knees, bathing your hands with my tears. The life of a workman or a soldier—anything would have suited me. It was then you informed me, that my adopted mother, to whom I owed my life—for she had taken me in, dying of want, and, poor herself, had shared with me the scanty bread of her child—admirable sacrifice for a mother!—that she," continued Gabriel, hesitating and casting down his eyes, for noble natures blush for the guilt of others, and are ashamed of the infamies of which they are themselves victims, "that she, that my adopted mother, had but one wish, one desire——"

"That of seeing you take orders, my dear son," replied Father d'Aigrigny; "for this pious and perfect creature hoped, that, in securing your salvation, she would provide

* This rule is so strict in Jesuit Colleges, that if one of three pupils leaves the other two, they separate out of earshot till the first comes back.

for her own: but she did not venture to inform you of this thought, for fear you might ascribe it to an interested motive."

"Enough, father!" said Gabriel, interrupting the Abbé d'Aigrigny, with a movement of involuntary indignation; "it is painful for me to hear you assert an error. Frances Baudoin never had such a thought."

"My dear son, you are too hasty in your judgments," replied Father d'Aigrigny, mildly. "I tell you, that such was the one, sole thought of your adopted mother."

"Yesterday, father, she told me all. She and I were equally deceived."

"Then, my dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny, sternly, "you take the word of your adopted mother before mine?"

"Spare me an answer painful for both of us, father," said Gabriel, casting down his eyes.

"Will you now tell me," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, with anxiety, "what you mean to——"

The reverend father was unable to finish. Samuel entered the room, and said: "A rather old man wishes to speak to M. Rodin."

"That is my name, sir," answered the socius, in surprise; "I am much obliged to you." But, before following the Jew, he gave to Father d'Aigrigny a few words written with a pencil upon one of the leaves of his pocket-book.

Rodin went out in very uneasy mood, to learn who could have come to seek him in the Rue Saint-François. Father d'Aigrigny and Gabriel were left alone together.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RUPTURE.

Plunged into a state of mortal anxiety, Father d'Aigrigny had taken mechanically the note written by Rodin, and held it in his hand without thinking of opening it. The reverend father asked himself in alarm, what conclusion Gabriel would draw from these recriminations upon the past; and he durst not make any answer to his reproaches, for fear of irritating the young priest, upon whose head such immense interests now reposed. Gabriel could possess nothing for himself, according to the constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Moreover, the reverend father had obtained from him, in

favor of the Order, an express renunciation of all property that might ever come to him. But the commencement of his conversation seemed to announce so serious a change in Gabriel's views with regard to the Company, that he might choose to break through the ties which attached him to it; and in that case, he would not be legally bound to fulfil any of his engagements.* The donation would thus be cancelled *de facto*, just at the moment of being so marvellously realized by the possession of the immense fortune of the Rennepont family, and D'Aigrigny's hopes would thus be completely and for ever frustrated. Of all these perplexities which the reverend father had experienced for some time past, with regard to this inheritance, none had been more unexpected and terrible than this. Fearing to interrupt or question Gabriel, Father d'Aigrigny waited, in mute terror, the end of this interview, which already bore so threatening an aspect.

The missionary resumed: "It is my duty, father, to continue this sketch of my past life, until the moment of my departure for America. You will understand, presently, why I have imposed on myself this obligation."

Father d'Aigrigny nodded for him to proceed.

"Once informed of the pretended wishes of my adopted mother, I resigned myself to them, though at some cost of feeling. I left the gloomy abode, in which I had passed my childhood and part of my youth, to enter one of the seminaries of the Company. My resolution was not caused by an irresistible religious vocation, but by a wish to discharge the sacred debt I owed my adopted mother. Yet the true spirit of the religion of Christ is so vivifying, that I felt myself animated and warmed by the idea of carrying out the adorable precepts of our Blessed Saviour. To my imagination, a seminary, instead of resembling the college where I had lived in painful restraint, appeared like a holy place, where all that was pure and warm in the fraternity of the Gospel would be applied to common life—where, for example, the lessons most frequently taught would be the ardent love of humanity, and the ineffable sweets of commiseration and tolerance—where the everlasting words of Christ would be interpreted in their broadest sense—and where, in fine, by the habitual exercise and expansion of the most generous sentiments, men were prepared for the

* The statutes formally state that the Company can expel all drones and wasps, but that no man can break his ties, if the Order wishes to retain him.

magnificent apostolic mission of making the rich and happy sympathize with the sufferings of their brethren, by unveiling the frightful miseries of humanity—a sublime and sacred morality, which none are able to withstand, when it is preached with eyes full of tears, and hearts overflowing with tenderness and charity!"

As he delivered these last words with profound emotion, Gabriel's eyes became moist, and his countenance shone with angelic beauty.

"Such is, indeed, my dear son, the spirit of Christianity; but one must also study and explain the letter," answered Father d'Aigrigny, coldly. "It is to this study that the seminaries of our Company are specially destined. Now the interpretation of the letter is a work of analysis, discipline, and submission—and not one of heart and sentiment."

"I perceive that only too well, father. On entering this new house, I found, alas! all my hopes defeated. Dilating for a moment, my heart soon sunk within me. Instead of this centre of life, affection, youth, of which I had dreamed, I found, in the silent and ice-cold seminary, the same suppression of every generous emotion, the same inexorable discipline, the same system of mutual prying, the same suspicion, the same invincible obstacles to all ties of friendship. The ardor which had warmed my soul for an instant soon died out; little by little, I fell back into the habits of a stagnant, passive, mechanical life, governed by a pitiless power with mechanical precision, just like the inanimate works of a watch."

"But order, submission and regularity are the first foundations of our Company, my dear son."

"Alas, father! it was death, not life, that I found thus organized. In the midst of this destruction of every generous principle, I devoted myself to scholastic and theological studies—gloomy studies—a wily, menacing, and hostile science which, always awake to ideas of peril, contest, and war, is opposed to all those of peace, progress, and liberty."

"Theology, my dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny, sternly, "is at once a buckler and a sword; a buckler, to protect and cover the Catholic faith—a sword, to attack and combat heresy."

"And yet, father, Christ and His apostles knew not this subtle science: their simple and touching words regenerated mankind, and set freedom over slavery. Does not the divine code of the Gospel suffice to teach men to love one

another? But, alas! far from speaking to us this language, our attention was too often occupied with wars of religion, and the rivers of blood that had flowed in honor of the Lord, and for the destruction of heresy. These terrible lessons made our life still more melancholy. As we grew near to manhood, our relations at the seminary assumed a growing character of bitterness, jealousy and suspicion. The habit of tale-bearing against each other, applied to more serious subjects, engendered silent hate and profound resentments. I was neither better nor worse than the others. All of us, bowed down for years beneath the iron yoke of passive obedience, unaccustomed to reflection or free-will, humble and trembling before our superiors, had the same pale, dull, colorless disposition. At last I took orders; once a priest, you invited me, father, to enter the Company of Jesus, or rather I found myself insensibly brought to this determination. How, I do not know. For a long time before, my will was not my own. I went through all my proofs; the most terrible was decisive; for some months, I lived in the silence of my cell, practicing with resignation the strange and mechanical exercises that you ordered me. With the exception of your reverence, nobody approached me during that long space of time; no human voice but yours sounded in my ear. Sometimes, in the night, I felt vague terrors; my mind, weakened by fasting, austerity, and solitude, was impressed with frightful visions. At other times, on the contrary, I felt a sort of quiescence, in the idea that, having once pronounced my vows, I should be delivered for ever from the burden of thought and will. Then I abandoned myself to an insurmountable torpor, like those unfortunate wretches, who, surprised by a snow-storm, yield to a suicidal repose. Thus I awaited the fatal moment. At last, according to the rule of discipline, *choking with the death rattle*,* I hastened the moment of accomplishing the final act of my expiring will—the vow to renounce it for ever."

"Remember, my dear son," replied Father d'Aigrigny, pale and tortured by increasing anguish, "remember, that, on the eve of the day fixed for the completion of your vows, I offered, according to the rule of our Company, to absolve you from joining us—leaving you completely free, for we accept none but voluntary vocations."

"It is true, father," answered Gabriel, with sorrowful

* This is their own command. The constitution expressly bids the novice wait for this decisive climax of the ordeal before taking the vows.

bitterness; "when, worn out and broken by three months of solitude and trial, I was completely exhausted, and unable to move a step, you opened the door of my cell, and said to me: 'If you like, rise and walk; you are free!' Alas! I had no more strength. The only desire of my soul, inert and paralyzed for so long a period, was the repose of the grave; and, pronouncing those irrevocable vows, I fell, like a corpse, into your hands."

"And, till now, my dear son, you have never failed in this corpse-like obedience,—to use the expression of our glorious founder—because, the more absolute this obedience, the more meritorious it must be."

After a moment's silence, Gabriel resumed: "You had always concealed from me, father, the true ends of the Society into which I entered. I was asked to abandon my free-will to my superiors, in the name of the Greater Glory of God. My vows once pronounced, I was to be in your hands a docile and obedient instrument; but I was to be employed, you told me, in a holy, great and beauteous work. I believed you, father—how should I not have believed you?—but a fatal event changed my destiny—a painful malady caused by——"

"My son," cried Father d'Aigrigny, interrupting Gabriel, "it is useless to recall these circumstances."

"Pardon me, father, I must recall them. I have the right to be heard. I cannot pass over in silence any of the facts, which have led me to take the immutable resolution that I am about to announce to you."

"Speak on, my son," said Father d'Aigrigny, frowning; for he was much alarmed at the words of the young priest, whose cheeks, until now pale, were covered with a deep blush.

"Six months before my departure for America," resumed Gabriel, casting down his eyes, "you informed me, that I was destined to confess penitents; and, to prepare me for that sacred ministry, you gave me a book."

Gabriel again hesitated. His blushes increased. Father d'Aigrigny could scarcely restrain a start of impatience and anger.

"You gave me a book," resumed the young priest, with a great effort to control himself, "a book containing questions to be addressed by a confessor to youths, and young girls, and married women, when they present themselves at the tribunal of penance. My God!" added Gabriel, shuddering at the remembrance. "I shall never forget that awful

moment. It was night. I had retired to my chamber, taking with me this book, composed, you told me, by one of our fathers, and completed by a holy bishop.* Full of respect, faith, and confidence, I opened those pages. At first, I did not understand them—afterwards I understood—and then I was seized with shame and horror—struck with stupor—and had hardly strength to close, with trembling hand, this abominable volume. I ran to you, father, to accuse myself of having involuntarily cast my eyes on those nameless pages, which, by mistake, you had placed in my hands."

"Remember, also, my dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny, gravely, "that I calmed your scruples, and told you that a priest, who is bound to hear everything under the seal of confession, must be able to know and appreciate everything; and that our Company imposes the task of reading this Compendium, as a classical work, upon young deacons seminarists, and priests, who are destined to be confessors."

"I believed you, father. In me the habit of inert obedience was so powerful, and I was so unaccustomed to independent reflection, that, notwithstanding my horror (with which I now reproached myself as with a crime), I took the volume back into my chamber, and read. Oh, father! what a dreadful revelation of criminal fancies, guilty of guiltiest in their refinement!"

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"You speak of this book in blamable terms," said Father d'Aigrigny, severely; "you were the victim of a too lively imagination. It is to it that you must attribute this fatal impression, and not to an excellent work, irreproachable for its special purpose, and duly authorized by the Church. You are not able to judge of such a production."

* * * * * * *

"I will speak of it no more, father," said Gabriel; and he thus resumed: "A long illness followed that terrible night. Many times, they feared for my reason. When I recovered, the past appeared to me like a painful dream. You told me, then, father, that I was not yet ripe for certain functions; and it was then that I earnestly entreated you to be allowed to go on the American missions. After having long refused my prayer, you at length consented. From my childhood, I had always lived in the college or seminary, in a state of

* It is impossible, even in Latin, to give our readers an idea of this infamous work.

continual restraint and subjection. By constantly holding down my head and eyes, I had lost the habit of contemplating the heavens and the splendors of nature. But, oh! what deep, religious happiness I felt, when I found myself suddenly transported to the centre of the imposing grandeur of the seas—half-way between the ocean and the sky!—I seemed to come forth from a place of thick darkness; for the first time, for many years, I felt my heart beat freely in my bosom; for the first time, I felt myself master of my own thoughts, and ventured to examine my past life, as from the summit of a mountain, one looks down into a gloomy vale. Then strange doubts rose within me. I asked myself by what right, and for what end, any beings had so long repressed, almost annihilated, the exercise of my will, of my liberty, of my reason, since God had endowed me with these gifts. But I said to myself, that perhaps, one day, the great, beauteous, and holy work, in which I was to have my share, would be revealed to me, and would recompense my obedience and resignation."

At this moment, Rodin re-entered the room. Father d'Aigrigny questioned him with a significant look. The socius approached, and said to him in a low voice, so that Gabriel could not hear: "Nothing serious. It was only to inform me, that Marshal Simon's father is arrived at M. Hardy's factory."

Then, glancing at Gabriel, Rodin appeared to interrogate Father d'Aigrigny, who hung his head with a desponding air. Yet he resumed, again addressing Gabriel, whilst Rodin took his old place, with his elbow on the chimney-piece: "Go on, my dear son. I am anxious to learn what resolution you have adopted."

"I will tell you in a moment, father. I arrived at Charleston. The superior of our establishment in that place, to whom I imparted my doubts as to the object of our Society, took upon himself to clear them up, and unveiled it all to me with alarming frankness. He told me the tendency—not perhaps of all the members of the Company, for a great number must have shared my ignorance—but the objects which our leaders have pertinaciously kept in view, ever since the foundation of the Order. I was terrified. I read the casuists. Oh, father! that was a new and dreadful revelation, when, at every page, I read the excuse and justification of robbery, slander, adultery, perjury, murder, regicide. When I considered that I, the priest of a God of charity, justice, pardon, and love, was to belong henceforth to a Company,

whose chiefs professed and glorified in such doctrines, I made a solemn oath to break for ever the ties which bound me to it!"*

On these words of Gabriel, Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin exchanged a look of terror. All was lost; their prey had escaped them. Deeply moved by the remembrances he recalled, Gabriel did not perceive the action of the reverend father and the socius, and thus continued: "In spite of my resolution, father, to quit the Company, the discovery I had made was very painful to me. Oh! believe me, for the honest and loving soul, nothing is more frightful than to have to renounce what it has long respected!—I suffered so much, that, when I thought of the dangers of my mission, I hoped, with a secret joy, that God would perhaps take me to Himself under these circumstances: but, on the contrary, He watched over me with providential solicitude."

As he said this, Gabriel felt a thrill, for he remembered a Mysterious Woman who had saved his life in America. After a moment's silence, he resumed: "My mission terminated, I returned hither to beg, father, that you would release me from my vows. Many times, but in vain, I solicited an interview. Yesterday, it pleased Providence that I should have a long conversation with my adopted mother; from her I learned the trick by which my vocation had been forced upon me—and the sacrilegious abuse of the confessional, by which she had been induced to entrust to other persons the orphans that a dying mother had confided to the care of an honest soldier. You understand, father, that, if even I had before hesitated to break these bonds, what I have heard yesterday must have rendered my decision irrevocable. But at this solemn moment, father, I am bound to tell you, that I do not accuse the whole Society; many simple, credulous, and confiding men, like myself, must no doubt form part of it. Docile instruments, they see not in their blindness the work to which they are destined. I pity them, and pray God to enlighten them, as he has enlightened me."

"So, my son," said Father d'Aigrigny, rising with livid and despairing look, "you come to ask of me to break the ties which attach you to the Society?"

"Yes, father; you received my vows—it is for you to release me from them."

* This is true. See the extracts from the Compendium for the use of Schools, published under the title of "Discoveries by a Bibliophilist." Strasburg, 1843. For regicide, see Sanchez and others.

"So, my son, you understand that engagements once freely taken by you, are now to be considered as null and void?"

"Yes, father."

"So, my son, there is to be henceforth nothing in common between you and our Company?"

"No, father--since I request you to absolve me of my vows."

"But, you know, my son, that the Society may release you—but that you cannot release yourself."

"The step I take proves to you, father, the importance I attach to an oath, since I come to you to release me from it. Nevertheless, were you to refuse me, I should not think myself bound in the eyes of God or man."

"It is perfectly clear," said Father d'Aigrigny to Rodin. his voice expiring upon his lips, so deep was his despair.

Suddenly, whilst Gabriel, with downcast eyes, waited for the answer of Father d'Aigrigny, who remained mute and motionless, Rodin appeared struck with a new idea, on perceiving that the reverend father still held in his hand the note written in pencil. The socius hastily approached Father d'Aigrigny, and said to him in a whisper, with a look of doubt and alarm: "Have you not read my note?"

"I did not think of it," answered the reverend father, mechanically.

Rodin appeared to make a great effort to repress a movement of violent rage. Then he said to Father d'Aigrigny, in a calm voice: "Read it now."

Hardly had the reverend father cast his eyes upon this note, than a sudden ray of hope illumined his hitherto despairing countenance. Pressing the hand of the socius with an expression of deep gratitude, he said to him in a low voice: "You are right. Gabriel is ours."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHANGE.

Before again addressing Gabriel, Father d'Aigrigny carefully reflected; and his countenance, lately so disturbed, became gradually once more serene. He appeared to meditate and calculate the effects of the eloquence he was about to employ, upon an excellent and safe theme, which the

socius, struck with the danger of the situation, had suggested in a few lines rapidly written with a pencil, and which, in his despair, the reverend father had at first neglected. Rodin resumed his post of observation near the mantelpiece, on which he leaned his elbow, after casting at Father d'Aigrigny a glance of disdainful and angry superiority, accompanied by a significant shrug of the shoulders.

After this involuntary manifestation, which was luckily not perceived by Father d'Aigrigny, the cadaverous face of the socius resumed its icy calmness, and his flabby eyelids, raised a moment with anger and impatience, fell, and half-veiled his little, dull eyes It must be confessed that Father d'Aigrigny, notwithstanding the ease and elegance of his speech, notwithstanding the seduction of his exquisite manners, his agreeable features, and the exterior of an accomplished and refined man of the world, was often subdued and governed by the unpitying firmness, the diabolical craft and depth of Rodin, the old, repulsive, dirty, miserably dressed man, who seldom abandoned his humble part of secretary and mute auditor. The influence of education is so powerful, that Gabriel, notwithstanding the formal rupture he had just provoked, felt himself still intimidated in presence of Father d'Aigrigny, and waited with painful anxiety for the answer of the reverend father to his express demand to be released from his old vows. His reverence having, doubtless, regularly laid his plan of attack, at length broke silence, heaved a deep sigh, gave to his countenance, lately so severe and irritated, a touching expression of kindness, and said to Gabriel, in an affectionate voice: "Forgive me, my dear son, for having kept silence so long; but your abrupt determination has so stunned me, and has raised within me so many painful thoughts, that I have had to reflect for some moments, to try and penetrate the cause of this rupture, and I think I have succeeded. You have well considered, my dear son, the serious nature of the step you are taking?"

"Yes, father."

"And you have absolutely decided to abandon the Society, even against my will?"

"It would be painful to me, father—but I must resign myself to it."

"It should be very painful to you, indeed, my dear son; for you took the irrevocable vow freely, and this vow, according to our statutes, binds you not to quit the Society, unless with the consent of your superiors."

"I did not then know, father, the nature of the engagement I took. More enlightened now, I ask to withdraw myself; my only desire is to obtain a curacy in some village far from Paris. I feel an irresistible vocation for such humble and useful functions. In the country, there is so much misery, and such ignorance of all that could contribute to ameliorate the condition of the agricultural laborer, that his existence is as unhappy as that of a negro slave; for what liberty has he? and what instruction? Oh! it seems to me, that, with God's help, I might, as a village curate, render some services to humanity. It would therefore be painful to me, father, to see you refuse——"

"Be satisfied, my son," answered Father d'Aigrigny; "I will no longer seek to combat your desire to separate yourself from us."

"Then, father, you release me from my vows?"

"I have not the power to do so, my dear son; but I will write immediately to Rome, to ask the necessary authority from our general."

"I thank you, father."

"Soon, my dear son, you will be delivered from these bonds, which you deem so heavy; and the men you abandon will not the less continue to pray for you, that God may preserve you from still greater wanderings. You think yourself released with regard to us, my dear son; but we do not think ourselves released with regard to you. It is not thus that we can get rid of the habit of paternal attachment. What would you have? We look upon ourselves as bound to our children, by the very benefits with which we have loaded them. You were poor, and an orphan; we stretched out our arms to you, as much from the interest which you deserved, my dear son, as to spare your excellent adopted mother too great a burden."

"Father," said Gabriel, with suppressed emotion, "I am not ungrateful."

"I wish to believe so, my dear son. For long years, we gave to you, as to our beloved child, food for the body and the soul. It pleases you now to renounce and abandon us. Not only do we consent to it—but now that I have penetrated the true motives of your rupture with us, it is my duty to release you from your vow."

"Of what motives do you speak, father?"

"Alas! my dear son, I understand your fears. Dangers menace us—you know it well."

"Dangers, father?" cried Gabriel.

"It is impossible, my dear son, that you should not be aware that, since the fall of our legitimate sovereigns, our natural protectors, revolutionary impiety becomes daily more and more threatening. We are oppressed with persecutions. I can, therefore, comprehend and appreciate, my dear son, the motive which under such circumstances, induces you to separate from us."

"Father!" cried Gabriel, with as much indignation as grief, "you do not think that of me—you cannot think it."

Without noticing the protestations of Gabriel, Father d'Aigrigny continued his imaginary picture of the dangers of the Company, which, far from being really in peril, was already beginning secretly to recover its influence.

"Oh! if our Company were now as powerful as it was some years ago," resumed the reverend father; "if it were still surrounded by the respect and homage which are due to it from all true believers—in spite of the abominable calumnies with which we are assailed—then, my dear son, we should perhaps have hesitated to release you from your vows, and have rather endeavored to open your eyes to the light, and save you from the fatal delusion to which you are a prey. But now that we are weak, oppressed, threatened on every side, it is our duty, it is an act of charity, not to force you to share in perils from which you have the prudence to wish to withdraw yourself."

So saying, Father d'Aigrigny cast a rapid glance at his socius, who answered with a nod of approbation, accompanied by a movement of impatience that seemed to say: "Go on! go on!"

Gabriel was quite overcome. There was not in the whole world a heart more generous, loyal, and brave than his. We may judge of what he must have suffered, on hearing the resolution he had come to thus misinterpreted.

"Father," he resumed, in an agitated voice, whilst his eyes filled with tears, "your words are cruel and unjust. You know that I am not a coward."

"No," said Rodin, in his sharp, cutting voice, addressing Father d'Aigrigny, and pointing to Gabriel with a disdainful look; "your dear son is only prudent."

These words from Rodin made Gabriel start; a slight blush colored his pale cheeks; his large and blue eyes sparkled with a generous anger; then, faithful to the precepts of Christian humility and resignation, he conquered this irritable impulse, hung down his head, and, too much agitated to reply, remained silent, and brushed away an un-

seen tear. This tear did not escape the notice of the socius. He saw in it no doubt, a favorable symptom, for he exchanged a glance of satisfaction with Father d'Aigrigny. The latter was about to touch on a question of great interest, so, notwithstanding his self-command, his voice trembled slightly; but encouraged, or rather pushed on by a look from Rodin, who had become extremely attentive, he said to Gabriel: "Another motive obliges us not to hesitate in releasing you from your vow, my dear son. It is a question of pure delicacy. You probably learned yesterday from your adopted mother, that you will perhaps be called upon to take possession of an inheritance, of which the value is unknown."

Gabriel raised his head hastily and said to Father d'Aigrigny: "As I have already stated to M. Rodin, my adopted mother only talked of her scruples of conscience, and I was completely ignorant of the existence of the inheritance of which you speak."

The expression of indifference with which the young priest pronounced these last words, was remarked by Rodin.

"Be it so," replied Father d'Aigrigny. "You were not aware of it—I believe you—though all appearances would tend to prove the contrary—to prove, indeed, that the knowledge of this inheritance was not unconnected with your resolution to separate from us."

"I do not understand you, father."

"It is very simple. Your rupture with us would then have two motives. First, we are in danger, and you think it prudent to leave us——"

"Father!——"

"Allow me to finish, my dear son, and come to the second motive. If I am deceived, you can tell me so. These are the facts. Formerly, on the hypothesis that your family, of which you knew nothing, might one day leave you some property, you made, in return for the care bestowed on you by the Company, a free gift of all you might hereafter possess, not to us—but to the poor, of whom we are the born shepherds."

"Well, father?" asked Gabriel, not seeing to what this preamble tended.

"Well, my dear son now that you are sure of enjoying a competence, you wish, no doubt, by separating from us, to annul this donation made under other circumstances."

"To speak plainly, you violate your oath, because we are persecuted, and because you wish to take back your gifts,"

added Rodin, in a sharp voice, as if to describe in the clearest and plainest manner the situation of Gabriel with regard to the Society.

At this infamous accusation, Gabriel could only raise his hands and eyes to heaven, and exclaim, with an expression of despair, "Oh, heaven!"

Once more exchanging a look of intelligence with Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny said to him, in a severe tone, as if reproaching him for his too savage frankness: "I think you go too far. Our dear son could only have acted in the base and cowardly manner you suggest, had he known his position as an heir; but, since he affirms the contrary, we are bound to believe him—in spite of appearances."

"Father," said Gabriel, pale, agitated trembling, and with half-suppressed grief and indignation, "I thank you, at least, for having suspended your judgment. No, I am not a coward: for heaven is my witness, that I knew of no danger to which the Society was exposed. Nor am I base and avaricious: for heaven is also my witness, that only at this moment I learn from you, father, that I may be destined to inherit property, and——"

"One word, my dear son. It is quite lately that I became informed of this circumstance, by the greatest chance in the world," said Father d'Aigrigny, interrupting Gabriel; "and that was thanks to some family papers which your adopted mother had given to her confessor, and which were entrusted to us when you entered our college. A little before your return from America, in arranging the archives of the Company, your file of papers fell into the hands of our father-attorney. It was examined, and we thus learned that one of your paternal ancestors, to whom the house in which we now are belonged, left a will which is to be opened to-day at noon. Yesterday, we believed you one of us; our statutes command that we should possess nothing of our own; you had corroborated those statutes, by a donation in favor of the patrimony of the poor—which we administer. It was no longer you, therefore, but the Company, which, in my person, presented itself as the inheritor in your place, furnished with your titles, which I have here ready in order. But now, my dear son, that you separate from us, you must present yourself in your own name. We came here as the representatives of the poor, to whom in former days you piously abandoned whatever goods might fall to your share. Now, on the contrary, the hope of a fortune changes your sentiments. You are free to resume your gifts."

Gabriel had listened to Father d'Aigrigny with painful impatience. At length he exclaimed: "Do you mean to say, father, that you think me capable of cancelling a donation freely made, in favor of the Company, to which I am indebted for my education? You believe me infamous enough to break my word, in the hope of possessing a modest patrimony?"

"This patrimony, my dear son, may be small; but it may also be considerable."

"Well, father! if it were a king's fortune," cried Gabriel, with proud and noble indifference, "I should not speak otherwise—and I have, I think, the right to be believed. Listen to my fixed resolution. The Company to which I belong runs, you say, great dangers. I will inquire into these dangers. Should they prove threatening—strong in the determination which morally separates me from you—I will not leave you till I see the end of your perils. As for the inheritance, of which you believe me so desirous, I resign it to you formally, father, as I once freely promised. My only wish is, that this property may be employed for the relief of the poor. I do not know what may be the amount of this fortune, but large or small, it belongs to the Company, because I have thereto pledged my word. I have told you, father, that my chief desire is to obtain a humble curacy in some poor village—poor, above all—because there my services will be most useful. Thus, father, when a man, who never spoke falsehood in his life, affirms to you, that he only sighs for so humble an existence, you ought, I think, to believe him incapable of snatching back, from motives of avarice, gifts already made."

Father d'Aigrigny had now as much trouble to restrain his joy, as he before had to conceal his terror. He appeared, however, tolerably calm, and said to Gabriel: "I did not expect less from you, my dear son."

Then he made a sign to Rodin, to invite him to interpose. The latter perfectly understood his superior. He left the chimney, drew near to Gabriel, and leaned against the table, upon which stood paper and inkstand. Then, beginning mechanically to beat the tattoo with the tips of his coarse fingers, in all their array of flat and dirty nails, he said to Father d'Aigrigny: "All this is very fine! but your dear son gives you no security for the fulfilment of his promise—except an oath—and that, we know, is of little value."

"Sir!" cried Gabriel.

"Allow me," said Rodin, coldly. "The law does not acknowledge our existence, and therefore can take no cogni-

zance of donations made in favor of the Company. You might resume to-morrow what you are pleased to give us to-day."

"But my oath, sir!" cried Gabriel.

Rodin looked at him fixedly, as he answered: "Your oath? Did you not swear eternal obedience to the Company, and never to separate from us?—and of what weight now are these oaths?"

For a moment Gabriel was embarrassed; but, feeling how false was this logic, he rose, calm and dignified, went to seat himself at the desk, took up a pen, and wrote as follows:

"Before God, who sees and hears me, and in the presence of you, Father d'Aigrigny and M. Rodin, I renew and confirm, freely and voluntarily, the absolute donation made by me to the Society of Jesus, in the person of the said Father d'Aigrigny, of all the property which may hereafter belong to me, whatever may be its value. I swear, on pain of infamy, to perform this irrevocable promise, whose accomplishment I regard, in my soul and conscience, as the discharge of a debt, and the fulfilment of a pious duty.

"This donation having for its object the acknowledgment of past services, and the relief of the poor, no future occurrences can at all modify it. For the very reason that I know I could one day legally cancel the present free and deliberate act, I declare, that if ever I were to attempt such a thing, under any possible circumstances, I should deserve the contempt and horror of all honest people.

"In witness whereof I have written this paper, on the 13th of February, 1832, in Paris, immediately before the opening of the testament of one of my paternal ancestors.

"GABRIEL DE RENNEPONT."

As he rose, the young priest delivered this document to Rodin, without uttering a word. The socius read it attentively, and, still impassible, answered, as he looked at Gabriel: "Well, it is a written oath—that is all."

Gabriel dwelt stupefied at the audacity of Rodin, who ventured to tell him, that this document, in which he renewed his donation in so noble, generous, and spontaneous a manner, was not all sufficient. The socius was the first again to break the silence, and he said to Father d'Aigrigny, with his usual cool impudence. "One of two things must be. Either your dear son means to render his donation absolutely valuable and irrevocable,—or——"

"Sir," exclaimed Gabriel, interrupting him, and hardly able to restrain himself, "spare yourself and me such a shameful supposition."

"Well, then," resumed Rodin, impassible as ever, "as you are perfectly decided to make this donation a serious reality, what objection can you have to secure it legally?"

"None, sir," said Gabriel, bitterly, "since my written and sworn promise will not suffice you."

"My dear son, said Father d'Aigrigny, affectionately, "if this were a donation for my own advantage, believe me I should require no better security than your word. But here I am, as it were, the agent of the Society, or rather the trustee of the poor, who will profit by your generosity. For the sake of humanity, therefore, we cannot secure this gift by too many legal precautions, so that the unfortunate objects of our care may have certainty instead of vague hopes to depend upon. God may call you to him at any moment, and who shall say that your heirs will be so ready to keep the oath you have taken?"

"You are right, father," said Gabriel, sadly; "I had not thought of the case of death, which is yet so probable."

Hereupon, Samuel opened the door of the room, and said: "Gentlemen, the notary has just arrived. Shall I show him in? At ten o'clock precisely, the door of the house will be opened."

"We are the more glad to see the notary," said Rodin, "as we just happen to have some business with him. Pray ask him to walk in."

"I will bring him to you instantly," replied Samuel, as he went out."

"Here is a notary," said Rodin to Gabriel. "If you have still the same intentions, you can legalize your donation in presence of this public officer, and thus save yourself from a great burden for the future."

"Sir," said Gabriel, "happen what may, I am as irrevocably engaged by this written promise, which I beg you to keep, father"—and he handed the paper to Father d'Aigrigny—"as by the legal document, which I am about to sign," he added, turning to Rodin.

"Silence, my dear son," said Father d'Aigrigny; "here is the notary," just as the latter entered the room.

During the interview of the administrative officer with Rodin, Gabriel, and Father d'Aigrigny, we shall conduct the reader to the interior of the walled-up house.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RED ROOM.

As Samuel had said, the door of the walled-up house had just been disencumbered of the bricks, lead, and iron, which had kept it from view, and its panels of carved oak appeared as fresh and sound, as on the day when they had first been

withdrawn from the influence of the air and time. The laborers, having completed their work, stood waiting upon the steps, as impatient and curious as the notary's clerk, who had superintended the operation, when they saw Samuel slowly advancing across the garden, with a great bunch of keys in his hand.

"Now, my friends," said the old man, when he had reached the steps, "your work is finished. The master of this gentleman will pay you, and I have only to show you out by the street door."

"Come, come, my good fellow," cried the clerk, "you don't think. We are just at the most interesting and curious moment; I and these honest masons are burning to see the interior of this mysterious house, and you would be cruel enough to send us away? Impossible!"

"I regret the necessity, sir, but so it must be. I must be the first to enter this dwelling, absolutely alone, before introducing the heirs, in order to read the testament."

"And who gave you such ridiculous and barbarous orders?" cried the clerk, singularly disappointed.

"My father, sir."

"A most respectable authority, no doubt; but come, my worthy guardian, my excellent guardian," resumed the clerk, "be a good fellow, and let us just take a peep in at the door."

"Yes, yes, sir, only a peep!" cried the heroes of the trowel, with a supplicating air.

"It is disagreeable to have to refuse you, gentlemen," answered Samuel; "but I cannot open this door, until I am alone."

The masons, seeing the inflexibility of the old man, unwillingly descended the steps; but the clerk had resolved to dispute the ground inch by inch, and exclaimed: "I shall wait for my master. I do not leave the house without him. He may want me—and whether I remain on these steps or elsewhere, can be of little consequence to you my worthy keeper."

The clerk was interrupted in his appeal by his master himself, who called out from the further side of the courtyard, with an air of business: "M. Piston! quick, M. Piston—come directly!"

"What the devil does he want with me?" cried the clerk, in a passion. "He calls me just at the moment when I might have seen something."

"M. Piston," resumed the voice, approaching, "do you not hear?"

While Samuel let out the masons, the clerk saw, through a clump of trees, his master running towards him bareheaded, and with an air of singular haste and importance. The clerk was therefore obliged to leave the steps, to answer the notary's summons, towards whom he went with a very bad grace.

"Sir, sir," said M. Dumesnil, "I have been calling you this hour with all my might."

"I did not hear you sir," said M. Piston.

"You must be deaf, then. Have you any change about you!"

"Yes, sir," answered the clerk, with some surprise.

"Well, then, you must go instantly to the nearest stamp-office, and fetch me three or four large sheets of stamped paper, to draw up a deed. Run! it is wanted directly."

"Yes, sir," said the clerk, casting a rueful and regretful glance at the door of the walled-up house.

"But make haste, will you, M. Piston," said the notary.

"I do not know, sir, where to get any stamped paper."

"Here is the guardian," replied M. Dumesnil. "He will no doubt be able to tell you."

At this instant, Samuel was returning, after showing the masons out by the street-door.

"Sir," said the notary to him, "will you please to tell me where we can get stamped paper?"

"Close by, sir," answered Samuel; "in the tobacconist's, No. 17, Rue Vieille-du-Temple."

"You hear, M. Piston?" said the notary to his clerk. "You can get the stamps at the tobacconist's, No. 17, Rue Vieille-du-Temple. Be quick! for this deed must be executed immediately before the opening of the will. Time presses."

"Very well, sir; I will make haste," answered the clerk, discontentedly, as he followed his master, who hurried back into the room where he had left Rodin, Gabriel, and Father d'Aigrigny.

During this time, Samuel, ascending the steps, had reached the door, now disencumbered of the stone, iron, and lead with which it had been blocked up. It was with deep emotion that the old man, having selected from his bunch of keys the one he wanted, inserted it in the keyhole, and made the door turn upon its hinges. Immediately he felt on his face a current of damp, cold air, like that which exhales from a cellar suddenly opened. Having carefully reclosed and double-locked the door, the Jew advanced along

the hall, lighted by a glass trefoil over the arch of the door. The panes had lost their transparency by the effect of time, and now had the appearance of ground-glass. This hall, paved with alternate squares of black and white marble, was vast, sonorous, and contained a broad staircase leading to the first story. The walls of smooth stone offered not the least appearance of decay or dampness; the stair-rail of wrought iron presented no traces of rust; it was inserted, just above the bottom step, into a column of gray granite, which sustained a statue of black marble, representing a negro bearing a flambeau. This statue had a strange countenance, the pupils of the eyes being made of white marble.

The Jew's heavy tread echoed beneath the lofty dome of the hall. The grandson of Isaac Samuel experienced a melancholy feeling, as he reflected that the footsteps of his ancestor had probably been the last which had resounded through this dwelling, of which he had closed the doors a hundred and fifty years before; for the faithful friend, in favor of whom M. de Rennepont had made a feigned transfer of the property, had afterwards parted with the same, to place it in the name of Samuel's grandfather, who had transmitted it to his descendants, as if it had been his own inheritance.

To these thoughts, in which Samuel was wholly absorbed, was joined the remembrance of the light seen that morning through the seven openings in the leaden cover of the belvedere; and, in spite of the firmness of his character, the old man could not repress a shudder, as, taking a second key from his bunch, and reading upon the label: The Key of the Red Room, he opened a pair of large folding doors, leading to the inner apartments. The window which, of all those in the house, had alone been opened, lighted this large room, hung with damask, the deep purple of which had undergone no alteration. A thick Turkey carpet covered the floor, and large arm-chairs of gilded wood, in the severe Louis XIV. style, were symmetrically arranged along the wall. A second door, leading to the next room, was just opposite the entrance. The wainscoting and the cornice were white, relieved with fillets and mouldings of burnished gold. On each side of this door was a large piece of buhl-furniture, inlaid with brass and porcelain, supporting ornamental sets of sea-crackle vases. The window was hung with heavy, deep-fringed damask curtains, surmounted by scolloped drapery, with silk tassels, directly opposite the

chimney-piece of dark-gray marble, adorned with carved brass-work. Rich chandeliers, and a clock in the same style as the furniture, were reflected in a large Venice glass, with basiled edges. A round table, covered with a cloth of crimson velvet, was placed in the centre of this saloon.

As he approached this table, Samuel perceived a piece of white vellum, on which were inscribed these words: "My testament is to be opened in this saloon. The other apartments are to remain closed, until after the reading of my last will—M. DE R."

"Yes," said the Jew, as he perused with emotion these lines traced so long ago; "this is the same recommendation as that which I received from my father; for it would seem that the other apartments of this house are filled with objects, on which M. de Rennepont set a high value, not for their intrinsic worth, but because of their origin. The Hall of Mourning must be a strange and mysterious chamber. Well," added Samuel, as he drew from his pocket a register bound in black shagreen, with a brass lock, from which he drew the key, after placing it upon the table, "here is the statement of the property in hand, which I have been ordered to bring hither, before the arrival of the heirs."

The deepest silence reigned in the room, at the moment when Samuel placed the register on the table. Suddenly, a simple and yet most startling occurrence roused him from his reverie. In the next apartment was heard the clear, silvery tone of a clock, striking slowly ten. And the hour was ten! Samuel had too much sense to believe in perpetual motion, or in the possibility of constructing a clock to go for one hundred and fifty years. He asked himself, therefore, with surprise and alarm, how this clock could still be going, and how it could mark so exactly the hour of the day. Urged with restless curiosity, the old man was about to enter the room; but recollecting the recommendation of his father, which had now been confirmed by the few lines he had just read from De Rennepont's pen, he stopped at the door, and listened with extreme attention.

He heard nothing—absolutely nothing, but the last dying vibration of the clock. After having long reflected upon this strange fact, Samuel, comparing it with the no less extraordinary circumstance of the light perceived that morning through the apertures in the belvedere, concluded that there must be some connection between these two incidents. If the old man could not penetrate the true cause of these extraor-

dinary appearances, he at least explained them to himself, by remembering the subterraneous communications, which, according to tradition, were said to exist between the cellars of this house and distant places; and he conjectured that unknown and mysterious personages thus gained access to it two or three times in a century. Absorbed in these thoughts Samuel approached the fireplace, which, as we have said, was directly opposite the window. Just then, a bright ray of sunlight, piercing the clouds, shone full upon two large portraits, hung upon either side of the fireplace, and not before remarked by the Jew. They were painted life-size, and represented one a woman, the other a man. By the sober yet powerful coloring of these paintings, by the large and vigorous style, it was easy to recognize a master's hand. It would have been difficult to find models more fitted to inspire a great painter. The woman appeared to be from five-and-twenty to thirty years of age. Magnificent brown hair, with golden tints, crowned a forehead, white, noble, and lofty. Her head-dress, far from recalling the fashion, which Madame de Sévigné brought in during the age of Louis XIV., reminded one rather of some of the portraits of Paul Veronese, in which the hair encircles the face in broad, undulating bands, surmounted by a thick plait, like a crown, at the back of the head. The eyebrows, finely pencilled, were arched over large eyes of bright, sapphire blue. Their gaze, at once proud and mournful, had something fatal about it. The nose, finely formed, terminated in slight dilated nostrils: a half smile, almost of pain, contracted the mouth; the face was a long oval, and the complexion, extremely pale, was hardly shaded on the cheek by a light rose-color. The position of the head and neck announced a rare mixture of grace and dignity. A sort of tunic or robe, of glossy black material, came as high as the commencement of her shoulders, and just marking her lithe and tall figure, reached down to her feet, which were almost entirely concealed by the folds of this garment.

The attitude was full of nobleness and simplicity. The head looked white and luminous, standing out from a dark gray sky, marbled at the horizon by purple clouds, upon which were visible the bluish summits of distant hills, in deep shadow. The arrangement of the picture, as well as the warm tints of the foreground, contrasting strongly with these distant objects, showed that the woman was placed upon an eminence, from which she could view the whole horizon. The countenance was deeply pensive and de-

sponding. There was an expression of supplicating and resigned grief, particularly in her look, half raised to heaven, which one would have thought impossible to picture. On the left side of the fireplace was the other portrait, painted with like vigor. It represented a man, between thirty and thirty-five years of age, of tall stature. A large brown cloak, which hung round him in graceful folds, did not quite conceal a black doublet, buttoned up to the neck, over which fell a square white collar. The handsome and expressive head was marked with stern powerful lines, which did not exclude an admirable air of suffering, resignation, and ineffable goodness. The hair, as well as the beard and eyebrows, was black; and the latter, by some singular caprice of nature, instead of being separated and forming two distinct arches, extended from one temple to the other, in a single bow, and seemed to mark the forehead of this man with a black line.

The background of this picture also represented a stormy sky; but, beyond some rocks in the distance, the sea was visible, and appeared to mingle with the dark clouds. The sun, just now shining upon these two remarkable figures (which it appeared impossible to forget, after once seeing them), augmented their brilliancy.

Starting from his reverie, and casting his eyes by chance upon these portraits, Samuel was greatly struck with them. They appeared almost alive. "What noble and handsome faces!" he exclaimed, as he approached to examine them more closely. "Whose are these portraits? They are not those of any of the Rennepont family, for my father told me that they are all in the Hall of Mourning. Alas!" added the old man, "one might think, from the great sorrow expressed in their countenances, that they ought to have a place in that mourning-chamber."

After a moment's silence, Samuel resumed: "Let me prepare everything for this solemn assembly, for it has struck ten." So saying, he placed the gilded arm-chairs round the table, and then continued, with a pensive air: "The hour approaches, and of the descendants of my grandfather's benefactor, we have seen only this young priest, with the angelic countenance. Can he be the sole representative of the Rennepont family? He is a priest, and this family will finish with him! Well! the moment is come when I must open this door, that the will may be read. Bathsheba is bringing hither the notary. They knock at the door; it is time!" And Samuel, after casting a last glance towards

the place where the clock had struck ten, hastened to the outer door, behind which voices were now audible.

He turned the key twice in the lock, and threw the portals open. To his great regret, he saw only Gabriel on the steps, between Rodin and Father d'Aigrigny. The notary, and Bathsheba, who had served them as a guide, waited a little behind the principal group.

Samuel could not repress a sigh, as he stood bowing on the threshold, and said to them: "All is ready, gentlemen. You may walk in."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TESTAMENT.

When Gabriel, Rodin, and Father d'Aigrigny entered the Red Room, they were differently affected. Gabriel, pale and sad, felt a kind of painful impatience. He was anxious to quit this house, though he had already relieved himself of a great weight, by executing before the notary, secured by every legal formality, a deed making over all his rights of inheritance to Father d'Aigrigny. Until now it had not occurred to the young priest, that in bestowing the care upon him, which he was about to reward so generously, and in forcing his vocation by a sacrilegious falsehood, the only object of Father d'Aigrigny might have been to secure the success of a dark intrigue. In acting as he did, Gabriel was not yielding, in his view of the question, to a sentiment of exaggerated delicacy. He had made this donation freely, many years before. He would have looked upon it as infamy now to withdraw it. It was hard enough to be suspected of cowardice: for nothing in the world would he have incurred the least reproach of cupidity.

The missionary must have been endowed with a very rare and excellent nature, or this flower of scrupulous probity would have withered beneath the deleterious and demoralizing influence of his education; but happily, as cold sometimes preserves from corruption, the icy atmosphere in which he had passed a portion of his childhood and youth had benumbed, but not vitiated, his generous qualities, which had indeed soon revived in the warm air of liberty. Father d'Aigrigny, much paler and more agitated than Gabriel, strove to excuse and explain his anxiety by attributing it to

the sorrow he experienced at the rupture of his dear son with the Order. Rodin, calm, and perfectly master of himself, saw with secret rage the strong emotion of Father d'Aigrigny, which might have inspired a man less confiding than Gabriel with strange suspicions. Yet, notwithstanding his apparent indifference, the socius was perhaps still more ardently impatient than his superior for the success of this important affair. Samuel appeared quite desponding, no other heir but Gabriel having presented himself. No doubt the old man felt a lively sympathy for the young priest; but then *he* was a priest, and with him would finish the line of Rennepont; and this immense fortune, accumulated with so much labor, would either be again distributed, or employed otherwise than the testator had desired. The different actors in this scene were standing round the table. As they were about to seat themselves, at the invitation of the notary, Samuel pointed to the register bound in black shagreen, and said: "I was ordered, sir, to deposit here this register. It is locked. I will deliver up the key, immediately after the reading of the will."

"This course is, in fact, directed by the note which accompanies the will," said M. Dumesnil, "as it was deposited, in the year 1682, in the hands of Master Thomas Le Semelier, king's counsel, and notary of the Châtelet of Paris, then living at No. 13, Place Royale."

So saying, M. Dumesnil drew from a portfolio of red morocco a large parchment envelope, grown yellow with time; to this envelope was annexed, by a silken thread, a note also upon vellum.

"Gentlemen," said the notary, "if you please to sit down, I will read the subjoined note, to regulate the formalities at the opening of the will."

The notary, Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny, and Gabriel, took seats. The young priest, having his back turned to the fireplace, could not see the two portraits. In spite of the notary's invitation, Samuel remained standing behind the chair of that functionary, who read as follows:

"'On the 13th February, 1832, my will shall be carried to No. 3, in the Rue Saint-François.

"'At ten o'clock precisely, the door of the Red Room shall be opened to my heirs, who will no doubt have arrived long before at Paris, in anticipation of this day, and will have had time to establish their line of descent.

"'As soon as they are assembled, the will shall be read, and, at the last stroke of noon, the inheritance shall be

finally settled in favor of those of my kindred, who, according to my recommendation (preserved, I hope, by tradition in my family, during a century and a half), shall present themselves in person, and not by agents, before twelve o'clock, on the 13th of February, in the Rue Saint-François.' "

Having read these words in a sonorous voice, the notary stopped an instant, and resumed, in a solemn tone: "M. Gabriel François Marie de Rennepont, priest, having established, by legal documents, his descent on the father's side, and his relationship to the testator, and being at this hour the only one of the descendants of the Rennepont family here present, I open the testament in his presence, as it has been ordered."

So saying, the notary drew from its envelope the will, which had been previously opened by the President of the Tribunal, with the formalities required by law. Father d'Aigrigny leaned forward, and resting his elbow on the table, seemed to pant for breath. Gabriel prepared himself to listen with more curiosity than interest. Rodin was seated at some distance from the table, with his old hat between his knees, in the bottom of which, half hidden by the folds of a shabby blue cotton handkerchief, he had placed his watch. The attention of the socius was divided between the least noise from without, and the slow evolution of the hands of the watch, which he followed with his little, wrathful eye, as if hastening their progress, so great was his impatience for the hour of noon.

The notary, unfolding the sheet of parchment, read what follows, in the midst of profound attention:

Hameau de Villetaneuse,
' " February 13th, 1682.

" ' I am about to escape, by death, from the disgrace of the galleys, to which the implacable enemies of my family have caused me to be condemned as a relapsed heretic.

" ' Moreover, life is too bitter for me since the death of my son, the victim of a mysterious crime.

" ' At nineteen years of age—poor Henry!—and his murderers unknown—no, not unknown—if I may trust my presentiments.

" ' To preserve my fortune for my son, I had feigned to abjure the Protestant faith. As long as that beloved boy lived, I scrupulously kept up Catholic appearances. The imposture revolted me, but the interest of my son was concerned.

"'When they killed him, this deceit became insupportable to me. I was watched, accused, and condemned as relapsed. My property has been confiscated, and I am sentenced to the galleys.

"'Tis a terrible time we live in! Misery and servitude! sanguinary despotism and religious intolerance! Oh, it is sweet to abandon life! sweet to rest and see no more such evils and such sorrows!

"'In a few hours, I shall enjoy that rest. I shall die. Let me think of those who will survive—or rather, of those who will live perhaps in better times.

"'Out of all my fortune, there remains to me a sum of fifty thousand crowns, deposited in a friend's hands.

"'I have no longer a son; but I have numerous relations, exiled in various parts of Europe. This sum of fifty thousand crowns, divided between them, would profit each of them very little. I have disposed of it differently.

"'In this I have followed the wise counsels of a man, whom I venerate as the image of God on earth, for his intelligence, wisdom, and goodness are almost divine.

"'Twice in the course of my life have I seen this man, under very fatal circumstances—twice have I owed him safety, once of the soul, once of the body.

"'Alas! he might perhaps have saved my poor child, but he came too late—too late.

"'Before he left me, he wished to divert me from the intention of dying—for he knew all. But his voice was powerless. My grief, my regret, my discouragement, were too much for him.

"'It is strange! when he was convinced of my resolution to finish my days by violence, some words of terrible bitterness escaped him, making me believe that he envied me—my fate—my death!

"'Is he perhaps condemned to live?

"'Yes; he has, no doubt, condemned himself to be useful to humanity, and yet life is heavy on him, for I heard him repeat one day, with an expression of despair and weariness that I have never forgotten: "Life! life! who will deliver me from it?"

"'Is life then so very burdensome to him?

"'He is gone. His last words have made me look for my departure with serenity. Thanks to him, my death shall not be without fruit.

"'Thanks to him, these lines, written at this moment by a man who, in a few hours, will have ceased to live, may

perhaps be the parents of great things a century and a half hence—yes! great and noble things, if my last will is piously followed by my descendants, for it is to them that I here address myself.

"'That they may understand and appreciate this last will—which I commend to the care of the unborn, who dwell in the future whither I am hastening—they must know the persecutors of my family and avenge their ancestor, but by a noble vengeance.

"'My grandfather was a Catholic. Induced by perfidious counsels rather than religious zeal, he attached himself, though a layman, to a Society whose power has always been terrible and mysterious—the Society of Jesus——'"

At these words of the testament, Father d'Aigrigny, Rodin, and Gabriel looked involuntarily at each other The notary, who had not perceived this action, continued to read:

"'After some years, during which he had never ceased to profess the most absolute devotion to this Society, he was suddenly enlightened by fearful revelations as to the secret ends it pursued, and the means it employed.

"'This was in 1610, a month before the assassination of Henry IV.

"'My grandfather, terrified at the secret of which he had become the unwilling depositary, and which was to be fully explained by the death of the best of kings, not only broke with the Society, but, as if Catholicism itself had been answerable for the crimes of its members, he abandoned the Romish religion, in which he had hitherto lived, and became a Protestant.

"'Undeniable proofs, attesting the connivance of two members of the Company with Ravaillac, a connivance also proved in the case of Jean Chatel, the regicide, were in my grandfather's possession.

"'This was the first cause of the violent hatred of the Society for our family. Thank Heaven, these papers have been placed in safety, and if my last will is executed, will be found marked A. M. C. D. G., in the ebony casket in the Hall of Mourning, in the house in the Rue Saint-François.

"'My father was also exposed to these secret persecutions. His ruin, and perhaps his death, would have been the consequence, had it not been for the intervention of an angelic woman, towards whom he felt an almost religious veneration.

"'The portrait of this woman, whom I saw a few years

ago, as well as that of the man whom I hold in the greatest reverence, were painted by me from memory, and have been placed in the Red Room in the Rue Saint-François—to be gratefully valued, I hope, by the descendants of my family.' "

For some moments Gabriel had become more and more attentive to the reading of this testament. He thought within himself by how strange a coincidence one of his ancestors had, two centuries before, broken with the Society of Jesus, as he himself had just done; and that from this rupture, two centuries old, dated also that species of hatred with which the Society of Jesus had always pursued his family. Nor did the young priest find it less strange that this inheritance, transmitted to him after a lapse of a hundred and fifty years, from one of his kindred (the victim of the Society of Jesus), should return by a voluntary act to the coffers of this same society. When the notary read the passage relative to the two portraits, Gabriel, who, like Father d'Aigrigny, sat with his back towards the pictures, turned round to look at them. Hardly had the missionary cast his eyes on the portrait of the woman, than he uttered a loud cry of surprise, and almost terror. The notary paused in his reading, and looked uneasily at the young priest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LAST STROKE OF NOON.

At the cry uttered by Gabriel, the notary had stopped reading the testament, and Father d'Aigrigny hastily drew near the young priest. The latter rose trembling from his seat, and gazed with increasing stupor at the female portrait.

Then he said in a low voice, as if speaking to himself, "Good Heaven! is it possible that nature can produce such resemblances? Those eyes—so proud and yet so sad—that forehead—that pale complexion—yes, all her features are the same—all of them!"

"My dear son, what is the matter?" said Father d'Aigrigny, as astonished as Samuel and the notary.

"Eight months ago," replied the missionary, in a voice of deep emotion, without once taking his eyes from the picture, "I was in the power of the Indians, in the heart of the Rocky

Mountains. They had crucified, and were begining to scalp me; I was on the point of death, when Divine Providence sent me unexpected aid—sent me this woman for a deliverer."

"That woman!" cried Samuel, Father d'Aigrigny, and the notary, all together.

Rodin alone appeared completely indifferent to this episode of the picture. His face contracted with angry impatience, he bit his nails to the quick, as he contemplated with agony the slow progress of the hands of his watch.

"What! that woman saved your life?" resumed Father d'Aigrigny.

"Yes, this woman," replied Gabriel, in a still lower and more trembling voice; "this woman—or rather a woman so much resembling her, that if this picture had not been here for a century and a half, I should have felt sure it was the same—nor can I explain to myself that so striking a resemblance could be the effect of chance. Well," added he, after a moment's silence, as he heaved a profound sigh, "the mysteries of Nature, and the will of God, are impenetrable."

Gabriel fell back into his chair, in the midst of a general silence, which was broken by Father d'Aigrigny saying, "It is a case of extraordinary resemblance; that is all, my dear son. Only, the natural gratitude which you feel towards your benefactress, makes you take a deep interest in this singular coincidence."

Rodin, bursting with impatience, here said to the notary, by whose side he stood, "It seems to me, sir, that all this little romance has nothing to do with the testament."

"You are right," answered the notary, resuming his seat; "but the fact is so extraordinary, and as you say, romantic, that one cannot help sharing in this gentleman's astonishment."

He pointed to Gabriel, who, with his elbow resting on the arms of the chair, leaned his forehead upon his hand, apparently quite absorbed in thought. The notary continued the reading of the will, as follows:—

"'Such are the persecutions to which my family has been exposed on the part of the Society of Jesus.

"'The Society possesses at this hour the whole of my confiscated property. I am about to die. May its hatred perish with me, and spare my kindred, whose fate at this solemn moment is my last and only thought.

"'This morning I sent for a man of long-tried probity—Isaac Samuel. He owes his life to me, and every day I con-

gratulate myself on having been able to preserve to the world so honest and excellent a creature.

"'Before the confiscation of my property, Isaac Samuel had long managed it with as much intelligence as uprightness. I have entrusted him with the fifty thousand crowns, returned to me by a faithful friend. Isaac Samuel, and his descendants after him, to whom he will leave this debt of gratitude, will invest the above sum, and allow it to accumulate, until the expiration of the hundred and fiftieth year from this time.

"'The amount thus accumulated may become enormous, and constitute a royal fortune, if no unfavorable event should occur. May my descendants attend to my wishes, as to the division and employment of this immense sum!

"'In a century and a half, there happen so many changes, so many varieties of fortunes, such a rise and fall in the condition of the successive generations of a family, that probably, a hundred and fifty years hence, my descendants will belong to various classes of society, and thus represent the divers social elements of their time.

"'There may, perhaps, be among them men of great intelligence, great courage, or great virtue—learned men, or names illustrious in arts and arms. There may, perhaps, also be obscure workmen, or humble citizens—perhaps, also, alas! great criminals.

"'However this may be, my most earnest desire is that my descendants should combine together, and, reconstituting one family, by a close and sincere union, put into practice the divine words of Christ, "Love ye one another."

"'This union would have a salutary tendency; for it seems to me that upon union, upon the association of men together, must depend the future happiness of mankind.

"'The Company, which so long persecuted my family, is one of the most striking examples of the power of association, even when applied to evil.

"'There is something so fruitful and divine in this principle, that it sometimes forces to good the worst and most dangerous combinations.

"'Thus, the missions have thrown a scanty but pure and generous light on the darkness of this Company of Jesus—founded with the detestable and impious aim of destroying, by a homicidal education, all will, thought, liberty, and intelligence, in the people, so as to deliver them, trembling, superstitious, brutal, and helpless, to the despotism of kings, governed in their turn by confessors belonging to the Society.'"

At this passage of the will, there was another strange look exchanged between Gabriel and Father d'Aigrigny. The notary continued :—

"'If a perverse association, based upon the degradation of humanity, upon fear and despotism, and followed by the maledictions of the people, has survived for centuries, and often governed the world by craft and terror—how would it be with an association, which, taking fraternity and evangelic love for its means, had for its end to deliver man and woman from all degrading slavery, to invite to the enjoyment of terrestrial happiness those who have hitherto known nothing of life but its sorrows and miseries, and to glorify and enrich the labor that feeds the state?—to enlighten those whom ignorance has depraved?—to favor the free expansion of all the passions, which God, in His infinite wisdom, and inexhaustible goodness, gave to man as so many powerful levers?—to sanctify all the gifts of Heaven: love, maternity, strength, intelligence, beauty, genius?—to make men truly religious, and deeply grateful to their Creator, by making them understand the splendors of Nature, and bestowing on them their rightful share in the treasures which have been poured upon us?

"'Oh! if it be Heaven's will that, in a century and a half, the descendants of my family, faithful to the last wishes of a heart that loved humanity, meet in this sacred union!—if it be Heaven's will that amongst them be found charitable and passionate souls, full of commiseration for those who suffer, and lofty minds, ardent for liberty! warm and eloquent natures! resolute characters! women, who unite beauty and wit with goodness—oh! then, how fruitful, how powerful will be the harmonious union of all these ideas, and influences, and forces—of all these attractions grouped round that princely fortune, which, concentrated by association, and wisely managed, would render practicable the most admirable Utopias!

"'What a wondrous centre of fertile and generous thoughts! What precious and life-giving rays would stream incessantly from this focus of charity, emancipation, and love! What great things might be attempted, what magnificent examples given to the world! What a divine mission! What an irresistible tendency towards good might be impressed on the whole human race by a family thus situated, and in possession of such means!

"'And, then, such a beneficent association would be able to combat the fatal conspiracy of which I am the victim,

and which, in a century and a half, may have lost none of its formidable power.

"'So, to this work of darkness, restraint, and despotism, which weighs heavily on the Christian world, my family would oppose their work of light, expansion, and liberty!

"'The genii of good and evil would stand face to face. The struggle would commence, and God would protect the right.

"'And that these immense pecuniary resources, which will give so much power to my family, may not be exhausted by the course of years, my heirs, following my last will, are to place out, upon the same conditions, double the sum that I have invested—so that, a century and a half later, a new source of power and action will be at the disposal of their descendants. What a perpetuity of good!

"'In the ebony cabinet of the Hall of Mourning will be found some practical suggestions on the subject of this association.

"'Such is my last will—or rather, such are my last hopes.

"'When I require absolutely that the members of my family should appear in person in the Rue Saint-François, on the day of the opening of this testament, it is so that, united in that solemn moment, they may see and know each other. My words may then, perhaps, have some effect upon them; and, instead of living divided, they will combine together. It will be for their own interest, and my wishes will thus be accomplished.

"'When I sent, a few days ago, to those of my family whom exile has dispersed over Europe, a medal on which is engraven the date of the convocation of my heirs, a century and a half from this time, I was forced to keep secret my true motive, and only to tell them, that my descendants would find it greatly to their interest to attend this meeting.

"'I have acted thus, because I know the craft and perseverance of the society of which I have been the victim. If they could guess that my descendants would hereafter have to divide immense sums between them, my family would run the risk of much fraud and malice, through the fatal recommendations handed down from age to age in the Society of Jesus.

"'May these precautions be successful! May the wish, expressed upon these medals, be faithfully transmitted from generation to generation!

"'If I fix a day and hour, in which my inheritance shall irrevocably fall to those of my descendants who shall appear

in the Rue Saint-François on the 13th February, in 1832, it is that all delays must have a term, and that my heirs will have been sufficiently informed years before of the great importance of this meeting.

"'After the reading of my testament, the person who shall then be the trustee of the accumulated funds, shall make known their amount, so that, with the last stroke of noon, they may be divided between my heirs then and there present.

"'The different apartments of the house shall then be opened to them. They will see in them divers objects, well worthy of interest, pity, and respect—particularly in the Hall of Mourning.

"'My desire is, that the house may not be sold, but that it may remain furnished as it is, and serve as a place of meeting for my descendants, if, as I hope, they attend to my last wishes.

"'If, on the contrary, they are divided amongst themselves—if, instead of uniting for one of the most generous enterprises that ever signalized an age, they yield to the influence of selfish passions—if they prefer a sterile individuality to a fruitful association—if, in this immense fortune, they see only an opportunity for frivolous dissipation, or sordid interest—may they be accursed by all those whom they might have loved, succored, and disfettered!—and then let this house be utterly demolished and destroyed, and the papers, of which Isaac Samuel possesses the inventory, as well as the two portraits in the Red Room, be burnt by the guardian of the property.

"'I have spoken. My duty is accomplished. In all this, I have followed the counsels of the man whom I revere and love as the image of God upon earth.

"'The faithful friend, who preserved for me the fifty thousand crowns, the wreck of my fortune, knows the use I mean to make of them. I could not refuse his friendship this mark of confidence. But I have concealed from him the name of Isaac Samuel—for to have mentioned it might have exposed this latter and his descendants to great dangers.

"'In a short time, this friend, who knows not that my resolution to die is so near its accomplishment, will come hither with my notary. Into their hands, after the usual formalities, I shall deliver my sealed testament.

"'Such is my last will. I leave its execution to the superintending care of Providence. God will protect the cause of love, peace, union, and liberty.

"'This mystic testament,* having been freely made by me, and written entirely with my own hand, I intend and will its scrupulous execution both in spirit and the letter.

"'This 13th day of February, 1682, at one o'clock in the afternoon. "'MARIUS DE RENNEPONT.'"

As the notary had proceeded with the reading of the testament, Gabriel was successively agitated by divers painful impressions. At first, as we have before said, he was struck with the singular fatality which restored this immense fortune, derived from a victim of the Society of Jesus, to the hands of that very association, by the renewal of his deed of gift. Then, as his charitable and lofty soul began fully to comprehend the admirable tendency of the association so earnestly recommended by Marius de Rennepont, he reflected with bitter remorse, that, in consequence of his act of renunciation, and of the absence of any other heir, this great idea would never be realized, and a fortune, far more considerable than had even been expected, would fall to the share of an ill-omened society, in whose hands it would become a terrible means of action. At the same time, it must be said that the soul of Gabriel was too pure and noble to feel the slightest personal regret, on hearing the great probable value of the property he had renounced. He rejoiced rather in withdrawing his mind, by a touching contrast, from the thought of the wealth he had abandoned, to the humble parsonage, where he hoped to pass the remainder of his life, in the practice of most evangelical virtue.

These ideas passed confusedly through his brain. The sight of that woman's portrait, the dark revelations contained in the testament, the grandeur of the views exhibited in this last will of M. de Rennepont, all these extraordinary incidents had thrown Gabriel into a sort of stupor, in which he was still plunged, when Samuel offered the key of the register to the notary, saying: "You will find, sir, in this register, the exact statement of the sums in my possession, derived from the investment and accumulation of the one hundred and fifty thousand francs, entrusted to my grandfather by M. Marius de Rennepont."

"Your grandfather!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, with the utmost surprise! "it is then your family that has always had the management of this property."

"Yes, sir; and, in a few minutes, my wife will bring hither the casket which contains the vouchers."

* This term is sanctioned by legal usage.

"And to what sum does this property amount?" asked Rodin, with an air of the most complete indifference.

"As M. Notary may convince himself by this statement," replied Samuel, with perfect frankness, and as if he were only talking of the original one hundred and fifty thousand francs, "I have in my possession various current securities to the amount of two hundred and twelve millions, one hundred and seventy——"

"You say, sir?" cried Father d'Aigrigny, without giving Samuel time to finish, for the odd money did not at all interest his reverence.

"Yes, the sum!" added Rodin, in an agitated voice, and, for the first time, perhaps, in his life, losing his presence of mind; "the sum—the sum—the sum!"

"I say, sir," resumed the old man, "that I hold securities for two hundred and twelve millions, one hundred and seventy-five thousand francs, payable to self or bearer—as you may soon convince yourself, M. Notary, for here is my wife with the casket."

Indeed, at this moment, Bathsheba entered, holding in her arms the cedar-wood chest, which contained the securities in question; she placed it upon the table, and withdrew, after exchanging an affectionate glance with Samuel. When the latter declared the enormous amount of the sum in hand, his words were received with silent stupor. All the actors in this scene, except himself, believed that they were the sport of some delusion. Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin had counted upon forty millions. This sum, in itself enormous, was more than quintupled. Gabriel, when he heard the notary read those passages in the testament, which spoke of a princely fortune, being quite ignorant of the prodigious effects of eligible investments, had valued the property at some three or four millions. He was, therefore, struck dumb with amazement at the exorbitant amount named. Notwithstanding his admirable disinterestedness and scrupulous honor, he felt dazzled and giddy at the thought, that all these immense riches might have belonged to him—alone. The notary, almost as much amazed as Gabriel, examined the statement, and could hardly believe his eyes. The Jew also remained mute, and seemed painfully absorbed in thought, that no other heir made his appearance.

In the depth of this profound silence, the clock in the next room began slowly to strike twelve. Samuel started, and heaved a deep sigh. A few seconds more, and the fatal

term would be at an end. Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny, Gabriel, and the notary, were all under the influence of such complete surprise, that not one of them even remarked how strange it was to hear the sound of this clock.

"Noon!" cried Rodin, as, by an involuntary movement, he hastily placed his two hands upon the casket, as if to take possession of it.

"At last!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, with an expression of joy, triumph, transport, which it is impossible to describe. Then he added, as he threw himself into Gabriel's arms, whom he embraced warmly: "Oh, my dear son! how the poor will bless you! You will be a second Vincent de Paul. You will be canonized, I promise you."

"Let us first thank Providence," said Rodin, in a grave and solemn tone, as he fell upon his knees, "let us thank Providence, that He has permitted so much wealth to be employed for His glory!"

Father d'Aigrigny, having again embraced Gabriel, took him by the hand, and said: "Rodin is right. Let us kneel, my dear son, and render thanks to Providence!"

So saying, Father d'Aigrigny knelt down, dragging Gabriel with him, and the latter, confused and giddy with so many precipitate events, yielded mechanically to the impulse. It was the last stroke of twelve when they all rose together.

Then said the notary, in a slightly agitated voice, for there was something extraordinary and solemn in this scene: "No other heir of M. Marius de Rennepont having presented himself, before noon on this day, I execute the will of the testator, by declaring, in the name of law and justice, that M. François Marie Gabriel de Rennepont, here present, is the sole heir and possessor of all the estate, real and personal, bequeathed under the said will; all which estate the said Gabriel de Rennepont, priest, has freely and voluntarily made over by deed of gift to Frederic Emanuel de Bordeville, Marquis d'Aigrigny, priest, who has accepted the same, and is, therefore, the only legal holder of such property, in the room of the said Gabriel de Rennepont, by virtue of the said deed, drawn up and engrossed by me this morning, and signed in my presence by the said Gabriel de Rennepont and Frederic d'Aigrigny."

At this moment, the sound of loud voices was heard from the garden. Bathsheba entered hastily, and said to her husband with an agitated air: "Samuel—a soldier—who insists——"

She had not time to finish. Dagobert appeared at the

door of the Red Room. The soldier was fearfully pale. He seemed almost fainting; his left arm was in a sling, and he leaned upon Agricola. At sight of Dagobert, the pale and flabby eyelids of Rodin were suddenly distended, as if all the blood in his body had flowed towards the head. Then the socius threw himself upon the casket, with the haste of ferocious rage and avidity, as if he were resolved to cover it with his body, and defend it at the peril of his life.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DEED OF GIFT.

FATHER D'AIGRIGNY did not recognize Dagobert, and had never seen Agricola. He could not, therefore, at first explain the kind of angry alarm exhibited by Rodin. But the reverend father understood it all, when he heard Gabriel utter a cry of joy, and saw him rush into the arms of the smith, exclaiming: "My brother! my second father—oh! it is heaven that sends you to me."

Having pressed Gabriel's hand, Dagobert advanced towards Father d'Aigrigny, with a rapid but unsteady step. As he remarked the soldier's threatening countenance, the reverend father, strong in his acquired rights, and feeling that, since noon, he was at home here, drew back a little, and said imperiously to the veteran: "Who are you, sir!—What do you want here?"

Instead of answering, the soldier continued to advance, then, stopping just facing Father d'Aigrigny, he looked at him for a second with such an astounding mixture of curiosity, disdain, aversion, and audacity, that the ex-colonel of hussars quailed before the pale face and glowing eye of the veteran. The notary and Samuel, struck with surprise, remained mute spectators of this scene, while Agricola and Gabriel followed with anxiety Dagobert's least movements. As for Rodin, he pretended to be leaning on the casket, in order still to cover it with his body.

Surmounting at length the embarrassment caused by the steadfast look of the soldier, Father d'Aigrigny raised his head, and repeated: "I ask you, sir, who you are, and what you want?"

"Do you not recognize me" said Dagobert, hardly able to restrain himself.

"No, sir——"

"In truth," returned the soldier, with profound contempt. "you cast down your eyes for shame, when, at Leipsic, you fought for the Russians against the French, and when General Simon, covered with wounds, answered you, renegade that you were, when you asked him for his sword, 'I do not surrender to a traitor!'—and dragged himself along to one of the Russian grenadiers, to whom he yielded up his weapon. Well! there was then a wounded soldier by the side of General Simon—I am he."

"In brief, sir, what do you want?" said Father d'Aigrigny, hardly able to control himself.

"I have come to unmask you—you, that are as false and hateful a priest, as Gabriel is admirable and beloved by all."

"Sir!" cried the marquis, becoming livid with rage and emotion.

"I tell you, that you are infamous," resumed the soldier, with still greater force. "To rob Marshal Simon's daughters, and Gabriel, and Mdlle. de Cardoville of their inheritance, you have had recourse to the most shameful means."

"What do you say?" cried Gabriel. "The daughters of Marshal Simon?"

"Are your relations, my dear boy, as is also that worthy Mdlle. de Cardoville, the benefactress of Agricola. Now, this priest," he added, pointing to Father d'Aigrigny, "has had them shut up—the one as mad, in a lunatic asylum—the others in a convent. As for you, my dear boy, I did not hope to find you here, believing that they would have prevented you, like the others, from coming hither this morning. But, thank God, you are here, and I arrive in time. I should have been sooner, but for my wound. I have lost so much blood, that I have done nothing but faint all the morning."

"Truly!" cried Gabriel, with uneasiness. "I had not remarked your arm in a sling. What is the wound?"

At a sign from Agricola, Dagobert answered: "Nothing: the consequence of a fall. But here I am, to unveil many infamies."

It is impossible to paint the curiosity, anguish, surprise, or fear, of the different actors in this scene, as they listened to Dagobert's threatening words. But the most overcome was Gabriel. His angelic countenance was distorted, his knees trembled under him. Struck by the communication of Dagobert, which revealed the existence of other heirs, he was unable to speak for some time; at length, he cried out, in a tone of despair: "And it is I—oh, God! I—who am the cause of the spoliation of this family!"

"You, brother?" exclaimed Agricola.

"Did they not wish to rob you also?" added Dagobert.

"The will," cried Gabriel, with increasing agony, "gave the property to those of the heirs that should appear before noon."

"Well?" said Dagobert, alarmed at the emotion of the young priest.

"Twelve o'clock has struck," resumed the latter. "Of all the family, I alone was present. Do you understand it now? The term is expired. The heirs have been thrust aside by me!"

"By you!" said Dagobert, stammering with joy. "By you, my brave boy! then all is well."

"But——"

"All is well," resumed Dagobert, radiant with delight. "You will share with the others—I know you."

"But all this property I have irrevocably made over to another," cried Gabriel, in despair.

"Made over the property!" cried Dagobert, quite petrified. "To whom, then?—to whom?"

"To this gentleman," said Gabriel, pointing to Father d'Aigrigny.

"To him!" exclaimed Dagobert, overwhelmed by the news; "to him—the renegade—who has always been the evil genius of this family!"

"But, brother," cried Agricola, "did you then know your claim to this inheritance?"

"No," answered the young priest, with deep dejection; "no—I only learned it this morning, from Father d'Aigrigny. He told me, that he had only recently been informed of my rights, by family papers long ago found upon me, and sent by our mother to her confessor."

A sudden light seemed to dawn upon the mind of the smith, as he exclaimed: "I understand it all now. They discovered in these papers, that you would one day have a chance of becoming rich. Therefore, they interested themselves about you—therefore, they took you into their college, where we could never see you—therefore, they deceived you in your vocation by shameful falsehoods, to force you to become a priest, and to lead you to make this deed of gift. Oh, sir!" resumed Agricola, turning towards Father d'Aigrigny, with indignation, "my father is right—such machinations are indeed infamous!"

During this scene, the reverend father and his socius, at first alarmed and shaken in their audacity, had by degrees

recovered all their coolness. Rodin, still leaning upon the casket, had said a few words in a low voice to Father d'Aigrigny. So that when Agricola, carried away by his indignation, reproached the latter with his infamous machinations, he bowed his head humbly, and answered: "We are bound to forgive injuries, and offer them to the Lord as a mark of our humility."

Dagobert, confounded at all he had just heard, felt his reason begin to wander. After so much anxiety, his strength failed beneath this new and terrible blow. Agricola's just and sensible words, in connection with certain passages of the testament, at once enlightened Gabriel as to the views of Father d'Aigrigny, in taking charge of his education, and leading him to join the Society of Jesus. For the first time in his life, Gabriel was able to take in at a glance all the secret springs of the dark intrigue, of which he had been the victim. Then, indignation and despair surmounting his natural timidity, the missionary, with flashing eye, and cheeks inflamed with noble wrath, exclaimed, as he addressed Father d'Aigrigny: "So, father, when you placed me in one of your colleges, it was not from any feeling of kindness or commiseration, but only in the hope of bringing me one day to renounce in favor of your Order my share in this inheritance; and it did not even suffice you to sacrifice me to your cupidity, but I must also be rendered the involuntary instrument of a shameful spoliation! If only I were concerned—if you only coveted my claim to all this wealth, I should not complain. I am the minister of a religion which honors and sanctifies poverty; I have consented to the donation in your favor, and I have not, I could never have any claim upon it. But property is concerned which belongs to poor orphans, brought from a distant exile by my adopted father, and I will not see them wronged. But the benefactress of my adopted brother is concerned, and I will not see her wronged. But the last will of a dying man is concerned, who, in his ardent love of humanity, bequeathed to his descendants an evangelic mission—an admirable mission of progress, love, union, liberty—and I will not see this mission blighted in its bud. No, no; I tell you, that this mission shall be accomplished, though I have to cancel the donation I have made."

On these words, Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin looked at each other with a slight shrug of the shoulders. At a sign from the socius, the reverend father began to speak with immovable calmness, in a slow and sanctified voice, keeping

his eyes constantly cast down: "There are many incidents connected with this inheritance of M. de Rennepont, which appear very complicated—many phantoms, which seem unusually menacing—and yet, nothing could be really more simple and natural. Let us proceed in regular order. Let us put aside all these calumnious imputations; we will return to them afterwards. M. Gabriel de Rennepont—and I humbly beg him to contradict me, if I depart in the least instance from the exact truth—M. Gabriel de Rennepont, in acknowledgment of the care formerly bestowed on him by the society to which I have the honor to belong, made over to me, as its representative, freely and voluntarily, all the property that might come to him one day, the value of which was unknown to him, as well as to myself."

Father d'Aigrigny here looked at Gabriel, as if appealing to him for the truth of this statement.

"It is true," said the young priest: "I made this donation freely."

"This morning, in consequence of a private conversation, which I will not repeat—and in this, I am certain beforehand, of the Abbé Gabriel——"

"True," replied Gabriel, generously; "the subject of this conversation is of little importance."

"It was then, in consequence of this conversation that the Abbé Gabriel manifested the desire to confirm this donation—not in my favor, for I have little to do with earthly wealth—but in favor of the sacred and charitable works of which our Company is the trustee. I appeal to the honor of M. Gabriel to declare if he have not engaged himself towards us, not only by a solemn oath, but by a perfectly legal act, executed in presence of M. Dumesnil, here present?"

"It is all true," answered Gabriel.

"The deed was prepared by me," added the notary.

"But Gabriel could only give you what belonged to him," cried Dagobert. "The dear boy never supposed that you were making use of him to rob other people."

"Do me the favor, sir, to allow me to explain myself," replied Father d'Aigrigny, courteously; "you can afterwards make answer."

Dagobert repressed with difficulty his painful impatience. The reverend father continued: "The Abbé Gabriel has therefore, by the double engagement of an oath and a legal act, confirmed his donation. Much more," resumed Father d'Aigrigny: "when to his great astonishment and to ours, the enormous amount of the inheritance became known, the

Abbé Gabriel, faithful to his own admirable generosity, far from repenting of his gifts, consecrated them once more by a pious movement of gratitude to Providence—for M. Notary will doubtless remember, that, after embracing the Abbé Gabriel with transport, and telling him that he was a second Vincent de Paul in charity, I took him by the hand, and we both knelt down together to thank heaven for having inspired him with the thought to offer these immense riches to the Greater Glory of the Lord."

"That is true, also," said Gabriel, honestly; "so long as myself was concerned, though I might be astounded for a moment by the revelation of so enormous a fortune, I did not think for an instant of cancelling the donation I had freely made."

"Under these circumstances," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, "the hour fixed for the settlement of the inheritance having struck, and Abbé Gabriel being the only heir that presented himself, he became necessarily the only legitimate possessor of this immense wealth—enormous, no doubt—and charity makes me rejoice that it is enormous, for, thanks to it, many miseries will be relieved and many tears wiped away. But, all on a sudden, here comes this gentleman," said Father d'Aigrigny, pointing to Dagobert; "and, under some delusion, which I forgive from the bottom of my soul, and which I am sure he will himself regret, accuses me, with insults and threats, with having carried off (I know not where) some persons (I know not whom), in order to prevent their being here at the proper time——"

"Yes, I accuse you of this infamy!" cried the soldier, exasperated by the calmness and audacity of the reverend father: "yes—and I will——"

"Once again, sir, I conjure you to be so good as to let me finish; you can reply afterwards," said Father d'Aigrigny, humbly, in the softest and most honeyed accents.

"Yes, I will reply, and confound you!" cried Dagobert.

"Let him finish, father. You can speak presently," said Agricola.

The soldier was silent as Father d'Aigrigny continued with new assurance: "Doubtless, if there should really be any other heirs, besides the Abbé Gabriel, it is unfortunate for them that they have not appeared in proper time. And if, instead of defending the cause of the poor and needy, I had only to look to my own interest, I should be far from availing myself of this advantage, due only to chance; but, as a trustee for the great family of the poor, I am obliged to

maintain my absolute right to this inheritance; and I do not doubt that M. Notary will acknowledge the validity of my claim, and deliver to me these securities, which are now my legitimate property."

"My only mission," replied the notary, in an agitated voice, "is faithfully to execute the will of the testator. The Abbé Gabriel de Rennepont alone presented himself, within the term fixed by the testament. The deed of gift is in due form; I cannot refuse, therefore, to deliver to the person named in the deed the amount of the heritage——"

On these words Samuel hid his face in his hands, and heaved a deep sigh; he was obliged to acknowledge the rigorous justice of the notary's observations.

"But, sir," cried Dagobert, addressing the man of law, "this cannot be. You will not allow two poor orphans to be despoiled. It is in the name of their father and mother that I speak to you. I give you my honor—the honor of a soldier!—that they took advantage of the weakness of my wife to carry the daughters of Marshal Simon to a convent, and thus prevent me bringing them here this morning. It is so true, that I have already laid my charge before a magistrate."

"And what answer did you receive?" said the notary.

"That my deposition was not sufficient for the law to remove these young girls from the convent in which they were, and that inquiries would be made——"

"Yes, sir," added Agricola, "and it was the same with regard to Mdlle. de Cardoville, detained as mad in a lunatic asylum, though in the full enjoyment of her reason. Like Marshal Simon's daughters, she too has a claim to this inheritance. I took the same steps for her, as my father took for Marshal Simon's daughters."

"Well?" asked the notary.

"Unfortunately, sir," answered Agricola, "they told me, as they did my father, that my deposition would not suffice, and that they must make inquiries."

At this moment, Bathsheba, having heard the street-bell ring, left the Red Room at a sign from Samuel. The notary resumed, addressing Agricola and his father: "Far be it from me, gent'emen, to call in question your good faith; but I cannot, to my great regret, attach such importance to your accusations, which are not supported by proof, as to suspend the regular legal course. According to your own confession, gentlemen, the authorities, to whom you addressed yourselves, did not see fit to interfere on your depo-

sitions, and told you they would inquire further. Now, really, gentlemen, I appeal to you: how can I, in so serious a matter, take upon myself a responsibility, which the magistrates themselves have refused to take?"

"Yes, you should do so, in the name of justice and honor?" cried Dagobert.

"It may be so, sir, in your opinion; but in my view of the case, I remain faithful to justice and honor, by executing with exactness the last will of the dead. For the rest, you have no occasion to despair. If the persons, whose interests you represent, consider themselves injured, they may hereafter have recourse to an action at law, against the person receiving as *donee* of the Abbé Gabriel—but in the meanwhile, it is my duty to put him in immediate possession of the securities. I should be gravely injured, were I to act in any other manner."

The notary's observations seemed so reasonable, that Samuel, Dagobert and Agricola were quite confounded. After a moment's thought, Gabriel appeared to take a desperate resolution, and said to the notary, in a firm voice: "Since, under these circumstances, the law is powerless to obtain the right, I must adopt, sir, an extreme course. Before doing so, I will ask M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny, for the last time, if he will content himself with that portion of the property which falls justly to me, on condition that the rest shall be placed in safe hands, till the heirs, whose names have been brought forward, shall prove their claim."

"To this proposition I must answer as I have done already," replied Father d'Aigrigny; "it is not I who am concerned, but an immense work of charity. I am, therefore, obliged to refuse the part-offer of the Abbé Gabriel, and to remind him of his engagements of every kind."

"Then you refuse this arrangement?" asked Gabriel, in an agitated voice.

"Charity commands me to do so."

"You refuse it—absolutely?"

"I think of all the good and pious institutions that these treasures will enable us to establish for the Greater Glory of the Lord, and I have neither the courage nor the desire to make the least concession."

"Then, sir," resumed the good priest, in a still more agitated manner, "since you force me to it, I revoke my donation. I only intended to dispose of my own property, and not of that which did not belong to me."

"Take care, M. l'Abbé," said Father d'Aigrigny; "I

would observe that I hold in my hand a written, formal promise."

"I know it, sir; you have a written paper, in which I take an oath never to revoke this donation, upon any pretext whatever, and on pain of incurring the aversion and contempt of all honest men. Well, sir! be it so," said Gabriel, with deep bitterness; "I will expose myself to all the consequences of perjury; you may proclaim it everywhere. I may be hated and despised by all—but God will judge me!" The young priest dried a tear, which trickled from his eye.

"Oh! do not be afraid, my dear boy!" cried Dagobert, with reviving hope. "All honest men will be on your side!"

"Well done, brother!" said Agricola.

"M. Notary," said Rodin, in his little sharp voice, "please to explain to Abbé Gabriel, that he may perjure himself as much as he thinks fit, but that the Civil Code is much less easy to violate than a mere promise, which is only—sacred!"

"Speak, sir," said Gabriel.

"Please to inform Abbé Gabriel," resumed Rodin, "that a deed of gift, like that made in favor of Father d'Aigrigny, can only be cancelled for one of three reasons—is it not so?"

"Yes, sir, for three reasons," said the notary.

"The first is in case of the birth of a child," said Rodin, "and I should blush to mention such a contingency to the Abbé Gabriel. The second is the ingratitude of the *donee*—and the Abbé Gabriel may be certain of our deep and lasting gratitude. The last case is the non-fulfilment of the wishes of the *donor*, with regard to the employment of his gifts. Now, although the Abbé Gabriel may have suddenly conceived a very bad opinion of us, he will at least give us some time to show that his gifts have been disposed of according to his wishes, and applied to the Greater Glory of the Lord."

"Now, M. Notary," added Father d'Aigrigny, "it is for you to decide and say, if Abbé Gabriel *can* revoke the donation he has made."

Just as the notary was going to answer, Bathsheba reentered the room, followed by two more personages, who appeared in the Red Room at a little distance from each other.

END OF VOLUME I.